



THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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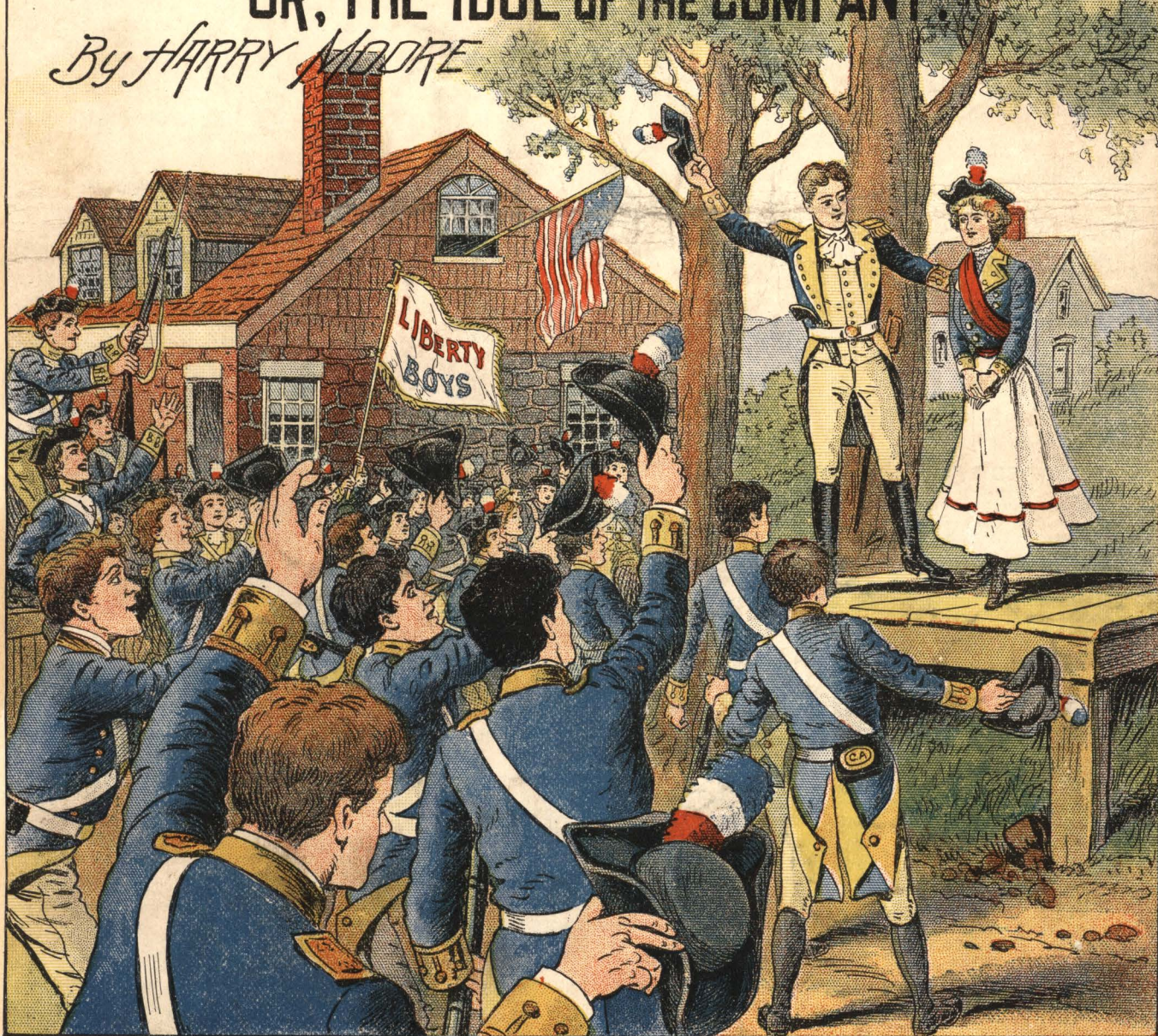
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CHAPTER I.

TWO OF THE SAME NAME.

One hot day in midsummer of the year 1779 a family sat at dinner in the roomy dining-room of their house, which was located on the main road leading from Savannah, Georgia, to Charleston, South Carolina. There were four in the family, viz.: Mr. and Mrs. Samuels, and George and Daisy, aged, respectively, twenty and seventeen years, the son and daughter. George was a bright, handsome fellow, and it would have been hard work to find a more beautiful girl than Daisy. She was good to look upon, and that is the truth, her blue eyes, fair face, golden hair and pearly teeth gleaming behind plump, red lips, making up such a pleasing sight that one would turn to look more than once.

They had just begun eating when they were disturbed by a call from outside.

"Hello!" called out some one. "Hello, in there!"

Mr. Samuels got up from the table and went to the door. He saw a youth of about twenty years, seemingly. The youth was a handsome, bronzed-faced fellow, with gray-blue eyes and long hair; and there was a firm look about his chin and a frank, honest expression to his face that was pleasing, to say the least. He was not well dressed, however, his clothes being almost ragged, and he had on rough boots and an old, slouch hat with holes in it.

"How are you, sir?" the stranger youth greeted as Mr. Samuels appeared. "I would like to get dinner for myself and feed for my horse if agreeable."

"What is your name?" asked Mr. Samuels.

"George Samuels."

Mr. Samuels started and looked at the youth in amazement.

"What is that you say?" he asked. "Did I understand you to say your name is George Samuels?"

"Yes," was the youth's reply, though he spoke somewhat hesitatingly and looked inquiringly and a bit suspiciously at the man. "Why should that surprise you?"

"Oh, for no reason that I know of. But alight; you shall have dinner for yourself and feed for your horse."

The youth leaped to the ground and waited for Mr. Samuels to tell him where to go with the horse. He only had to wait a few moments, as Mr. Samuels merely stuck his head back into the house and said: "Martha, lay another plate. A stranger is going to take dinner with us."

Then he said to the youth: "Come with me."

He led the way around the house and to a good-sized stable, which stood fifty yards back of the house. The horse was led into a stall and was given a portion of oats and hay, and then the two men went back to the house and entered.

Mrs. Samuels and her son and daughter rose from the table as they entered.

"Martha," said the man, addressing his wife, "allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. George Samuels; Mr. Samuels, my wife, Mrs. Samuels. And this is my son George, and this my daughter Daisy."

The young stranger laughed merrily as he stepped forward and shook hands with each of the three in turn. "Now I know what astonished Mr. Samuels when I told him my name," he said; "my name is the same as that of his own son."

"Isn't it strange!" exclaimed Mrs. Samuels.

"How jolly!" exclaimed Daisy, smiling upon the young stranger in a manner well calculated to turn his head.

"Why, Daisy!" said her mother, "you should not use such—such language."

"Don't scold her, ma'am," said the youth with a smile; "she is—well, just jolly when she talks and smiles like that."

Daisy burst into a peal of silvery laughter and shook her finger at the handsome young stranger.

"Be careful, sir!" she said; "mother doesn't allow any young man to flatter me. She says it is likely to turn my head, and I don't wish that to happen, for wouldn't I look dreadful with my head turned?" and she made a mock attempt to twist her head around so she would have her face in the other direction.

"That would be dreadful, sure enough," laughed the stranger youth; "but I guess there is no danger of that happening. It would be impossible to say anything to you that would be flattery."

"Oh, my; worse and worse!" laughed the girl. "Stop, please, or mother won't let you eat dinner here, but will insist that you mount your horse and ride on to the next neighbor."

The young man turned and looked Mrs. Samuels in the eyes with such a frank, open and respectful look that she smiled. She was a woman of discernment, and she read in those honest eyes of the young man that he was a true man and a gentleman.

"You look like my mother, Mrs. Samuels," said the youth, a half-sad look appearing in his eyes.

"Ah, indeed?" with a softening look in her eyes. "Your mother is alive?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Where does she live?"

"Away up in New York State."

"Ah, that is a good ways from here."

"Yes."

"Have you a sister that looks like me, Mr. Samuels?" asked Daisy.

"I have a sister, miss," was the reply; "but she doesn't look like you."

"She is better-looking than I, I will warrant," with a merry laugh.

The youth shook his head. "That would be impossible," he replied.

Daisy blushed, though it was plain to be seen that she was not displeased. "I really did not mean to fish for a compliment, Mr. Samuels," she said; "I hope you will believe me."

"I believe you, Miss Daisy," was the prompt reply; "I know you were not, for you will never of necessity have to fish for compliments. They will come without your asking for them."

"Oh, goodness! Let's eat dinner!" Daisy cried, blushing and laughing; "the food is getting cold, anyway."

"I hardly think there is danger of it getting cold, Daisy," said her brother, with a smile, "with the thermometer one hundred in the shade."

"That is the most sensible thing you have said for the past few minutes, Daisy," said her mother, smiling; "sit up to the table, all, and we will have something to eat."

They seated themselves, and as they ate they conversed. It was evident that the members of the family were some-

what curious regarding their visitor. He was roughly dressed, true, but there was an air about him that bespoke the gentleman, and to the eyes of George, who knew something about such things, the actions and air of the visitor were such as bespoke a soldier, and a veteran at that.

"I believe he is a soldier in disguise," the young man said to himself. "I should not wonder if he were a spy—and I wonder which side he is on?"

He watched the young stranger closely, and was more and more favorably impressed. "I like his looks, by Jove!" he said to himself. "I wish he were a patriot and then I might be able to do him some good, or he might be of benefit to General Sumpter."

"You say you are from New York?" remarked Mr. Samuels.

"Yes," replied the young stranger.

"How is everything up in that part of the country?"

"Rather quiet just now."

"Not much doing, eh?"

"No, sir."

"I suppose you came all the way on horseback?"

"Yes, sir."

"You must have come past Morristown, then, in crossing New Jersey."

"Yes, sir."

It was evident that the young stranger was a cautious fellow. He was not in for committing himself until he should know the side taken by his host in the war.

"Have you ever seen General Washington?" asked George Samuels, eyeing the other closely.

"Yes, I have seen him," was the quiet reply.

"Oh, how I should like to see him!" cried Daisy, her eyes sparkling. "He must be a grand man!"

Daisy had unconsciously let the cat out of the bag. The Samuels were patriots, without doubt; were it otherwise the girl would never have spoken in such terms of the commander-in-chief of the Continental army.

The young stranger gave a quick, searching, though fleeting glance at the other three members of the family, and what he saw was sufficient to tell him that they were patriots. They were looking at the girl, warningly, and she had evidently just realized that she had said something she ought not to have said, for her face flushed and she looked at the young stranger quickly and searchingly, though with a confused expression on her face.

As for the young man he laughed merrily. "Good for you, Miss Daisy!" he said. "I am glad you said what you did, for now I know that you are patriots—and the knowl-

edge gives me a great deal of pleasure and makes it possible for me to be at ease among you, for—I am a patriot, too.”

“I suspected as much,” said George Samuels; “and you are a patriot spy, too, are you not?”

The stranger laughed. “Well, I have done some work in that line,” he acknowledged; “in fact, I have done work in almost every department of the army.”

“I knew it!” cried George; “I knew you were a soldier. Your air and actions proclaimed the fact.”

The young stranger eyed George closely. “You must be a soldier yourself, then, or you would not have been able to detect the symptoms,” he said, smiling.

“I am not a member of the regular army,” was the reply, “but I am a little bit of a soldier, nevertheless. I am a member of Sumpter’s band.”

“Ah!” the other exclaimed, “I have heard of Sumpter. And you are a member of his band?”

“I am.”

“Then he must be in this vicinity?”

“I don’t know exactly where he is now. I secured a week’s lay-off and am home on a visit. My time is up in two more days, when I will rejoin him. I know where he will be on that day and will be able to find him.”

“I see.”

“Brother has been in five engagements with Tories and redcoats!” said Daisy, proudly, her eyes shining. It was evident that she was proud of her brother.

“Oh, come, sis; don’t go to bragging about me before the stranger,” protested George; “he is a regular soldier and has been in real battles, I have no doubt.”

“Oh, Mr. Samuels, have you been in any real battles?” cried the beautiful girl, looking at the youth eagerly, her eyes shining with excitement.

The young man nodded and smiled. “Yes, I have been in some real battles,” he replied, with quite a modest air.

“Oh, tell us some that you have been in!” the girl exclaimed. “I do so love to hear about battles. Oh, I wish I were a boy so that I could go to war! I would be only too willing to give up my life, if need be, to help the people secure their freedom from the tyrannical King George!”

Dick gave the girl an admiring glance. “You are indeed a patriot, Miss Daisy!” he said. “You are a true-hearted girl, and I am proud that I have been able to become acquainted with you. I consider it a great honor.”

“Oh, I would go with the soldiers if I could, even though I am a girl!” Daisy cried. “I wish there was something that a girl could do so that she could go into the army with propriety. Ah, I would go at once!”

“Goodness! what a mascot you would make for a company or regiment, Miss Daisy!” exclaimed the young stranger.

“A mascot? That would be fine!” the girl cried. “Well, maybe I will have the chance to be a mascot, one of these days. I hope so!”

“And I hope that if you ever do become the mascot of a company or regiment, Miss Daisy, that it will be the company or regiment to which I belong,” said the young man earnestly. “With you there we could not lose a battle. And with such a beautiful and noble-hearted girl for a mascot the soldiers would fight to the death.”

“Oh, dear! there you go again!” blushing rosily. “If you don’t stop that mother will be so angry she won’t let you eat another bite, but will send you on your way!”

The young man looked around at Mrs. Samuels with the frank, honest light shining in his eyes, and smiled into the eyes of the woman. Then he reached out his hand and stroked her hair back from her forehead, gently. “No, she won’t, Daisy,” he said quietly. “She looks like my mother, and she knows that I am the right kind of a boy—don’t you, Mrs. Samuels?”

The woman looked at the youth with a peculiar, tender light in her eyes, and said: “Yes, I do know it. If it were necessary that I should hunt up some outside person to take care of you, Daisy, I should go no farther than right here!” and she laid her hand on the young stranger’s arm.

“I don’t think you would make any mistake, Mrs. Samuels,” said the youth quietly.

“I know I would not,” was the quiet, decided reply.

“Goody! Oh, I’m so glad you like him, mother!” cried Daisy, clapping her hands; and then suddenly realizing that she was displaying more interest in almost a total stranger than she ought, the girl blushed and looked confused.

The youth smilingly reached across the corner of the table and gave the girl’s golden hair a playful pull. “That is all right, Daisy,” he said; “I am glad that you like me, and you shall be my sister while I am in this part of the country, and when I go back home I will tell sister Edith that I have another sister down in Georgia, and make her jealous.”

A sober look came over the face of Daisy Samuels, and remained there for several minutes. She stole occasional glances at the handsome young stranger, and it was plain that she was thinking of something which was not exactly as pleasant as she would have had it.

The girl did not formulate her thoughts in word form,

but the idea that was there was that the young man had said she should be his sister while he was in that part of the country, and somehow the feeling had taken hold upon her that she should like to be something else than a sister to him.

Suddenly, as they ate and talked, there came an interruption. The door was standing open, the weather being very warm, and without having gone to the trouble of knocking, four British soldiers and a captain, judging by his uniform, strode into the room and approached the party seated at the table.

Pointing his sword at George Samuels the captain said, in an arrogant voice, addressing his comrades: "There is the cursed young rebel! He is a member of Sumpter's gang. Seize him!"

CHAPTER II.

THE GIRL MASCOT.

A cry of alarm escaped the lips of Mrs. Samuels, and she stared at the British officer with starting eyes. Her beloved son was in danger, and all the mother love was aroused. A scream escaped the lips of Daisy, and then the next instant she had leaped to her feet and was between the officer and her brother, who had not said a word, or made a move, but had remained sitting quietly at the table, staring at the redcoats. The young stranger had not made a move, either, but it happened that he sat facing toward the redcoats and he could see everything that was going on. He noted with satisfaction that George Samuels did not turn pale or seem to be greatly frightened. Surprise seemed to be the feeling dominant within him, and the young man who had acknowledged that he was a patriot soldier and spy was sure George was turning over in his mind the chances for making his escape. And when the girl leaped up and stationed herself between the redcoats and her brother, a look of admiration came over the youth's face.

"Jove! she is a brave girl!" he said to himself. "She would make a good soldier, sure enough; and I have an idea that brother of hers is a brave fellow. He takes the matter very coolly."

"You shall not touch my brother!" Daisy cried, her voice ringing out loud and clear. "You shall not, do you hear?"

The officer started back in surprise and then as his eyes

drank in the wonderful beauty of the maiden a peculiar light entered the orbs—a wicked, covetous light. "Jove! what a beauty!" was the thought that flashed through his mind. "And she is the sister of the young rebel. That will give me a good excuse for carrying her away, too—ha, ha, ha! I guess she will wish she had kept in the background and not obtruded her charms on the notice of yours truly, Captain Carroll Garver!"

Aloud he said: "Stand aside, miss!"

"I will not!" was the defiant reply. "You shall not take my brother away!"

"We must, and will take him!"

"But you shall not! You will have to kill me, first!"

"Oh, no; we wouldn't think of doing such a thing as that, young lady!" was the half-sneering reply. "We know a trick worth two or three of that. You are far too beautiful to be put to death. I think I know of some other way of working it; in fact, if you don't stand aside, out of the way, we shall be under the necessity of taking you along with your brother!"

"You would not dare!"

"Oh, wouldn't we?" sneeringly.

"No."

"You will see, if you don't step aside!" The fellow's tone was threatening in the extreme.

"Oh, daughter, please come away!" said Mrs. Samuels, who was more afraid for Daisy than for George, as was natural.

"Your mother is giving you good advice, miss," said the captain.

"Yes, sit down, Daisy," said George, earnestly. "They have come for me, and as they outnumber me five to one, I suppose I will have to go with them."

"But you will be shot or hanged, George!" the girl protested, her voice trembling.

"Perhaps not, sis. Anyway, I can't help myself and might as well go along peaceably.

"That is sensible talk," said the captain, approvingly. "Just stand aside, miss."

But the girl was not willing to do it. "I won't!" she said, determinedly. "I will not let you take my brother! You shall not take him!"

The British captain turned to his men, and, indicating the girl, said: "Seize her, a couple of you, and make a prisoner of her! She is too much of a tiger-cat to be allowed to be free."

Two of the men started forward with the intention of obeying the orders of their commander and making the girl a prisoner, but the young stranger, who had until then

been a silent spectator, decided to take a hand. As the two men started forward, he drew a pair of pistols with a lightning-like motion, and leveling the weapons at the redcoats' heads, cried out, in a stern, ringing voice:

"Stop! The first man who attempts to lay hands on that girl dies!"

It is hard to say who was the most surprised person in the room. The members of the Samuels family were as greatly surprised as were the redcoats, and every eye was on the daring youth who had so boldly bade defiance to the redcoats.

A snarl of rage escaped the lips of Captain Garver. "Young fellow, you are simply courting death by acting in the way you have!" he cried. "Put down those pistols!"

"Oh, no!" was the calm reply.

"Put them down, I say!"

The young stranger shook his head. "I couldn't think of it," he remarked in the most matter-of-fact manner imaginable.

"If you don't put the pistols away immediately we shall take you along with us when we go!"

"Thank you, I don't care about going there. It's hot enough here for me."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say."

"But I don't understand you."

"I thought I spoke plain English—and you are an Englishman, are you not?"

"Yes, and I'm proud of it!"

"Well, I'm an American, and I'm proud of it!"

"Bosh! But explain what you meant by what you said just now."

"Well, you said you would take me with you when you go, did you not?"

"Yes, that is what I said."

"And I said I didn't want to go; that it is warm enough here for me."

"Yes; but what did you mean?"

"Isn't my meaning plain?"

"No."

"Then you must be very dull, indeed. I meant that when you go you will probably go—down!" pointing downward with the muzzle of one of the pistols. "And I don't care about going there."

A curse escaped the lips of the captain.

"So that's what you meant, is it?" he growled.

"Yes."

"You probably think you are funny, don't you?"

"Oh, no; not at all."

"I judged so by your making such a would-be humorous remark."

"Oh, but I didn't intend it that way, my dear captain."

"You didn't?"

"No; I meant it seriously. I meant just what I said."

"Oh, you did?" The captain showed his teeth in a sneering smile, which made him look something like a hyena.

"Yes."

"Bah! I have not much time to fool away. Are you going to put those pistols down?"

"No."

"You are not?"

"I am not!"

"By refusing to do so you are signing your own death-warrant."

"Do you think so?" The youth smiled in a bland manner as he asked the question.

"I know it!" fiercely.

"Oh, you know it?"

"Yes."

"You mean that you think you know it."

"No, I mean just what I said. I know it."

"But you don't know it, captain. There is not the least danger that I have signed my death-warrant by refusing to put the pistols down. On the contrary, I think I should be much more likely to sign it by doing so."

"You will find out!"

"Undoubtedly; and so will you."

"Enough of this! For the last time, will you put the pistols down?"

"For the last time, I will not!"

"You had better!"

It was evident that the captain, in spite of all his bravado and threatening talk, did not like the looks of the pistols, or of the young man who held them. He was a pretty shrewd fellow, was Captain Garver, and somehow he got the idea into his head that the young stranger was a dangerous fellow. He fancied that he saw the word "Shoot!" written in those clear, unwinking eyes, and at such a close range, if the youth was anything of a pistol shot at all, he would be able to kill or seriously wound at least two of the enemy—and the captain would have been willing to wager that the youth was a good shot. There was a peculiar air of confidence about him that betokened the fact that he was sure of his abilities.

"Let me tell you something, captain," said the youth, quietly; "you have just told me I had better drop the pistols, and now I will take my turn at it and tell you

that you and your men had better leave this house and go about your business. Do you understand?"

The officer nodded. "I understand," he said; "but I am not taking advice from rebels just yet."

"You would be better off if you were doing so. It would save the lives of yourself and some or all of your men, for I give you my word that if you attempt to lay hands on either the young lady or on the young man, I shall shoot, and shoot to kill!" There were a few moments of silence and then the youth went on: "I will add that I am a dead-shot with the pistol, and that I hold the lives of two of your number at my mercy."

"I don't believe it!" the captain growled, but the men looked worried. They evidently believed it and were of the opinion that the best thing they could do would be to withdraw from the house and give up the attempt to capture the young rebel, George Samuels.

"Miss Daisy," said the stranger youth, "kindly step around out of the way. You might get hurt where you are. Don't be afraid," as she hesitated, "they will not touch you. I will shoot the first man dead that makes a move to do so!"

The girl quietly vacated her place between the redcoats and her brother, and it was now seen that George had drawn pistols, so the redcoats were now threatened by four weapons.

"Now then, captain, you have a free field," said the youth; "but I advise you to give up your idea of making a prisoner of this young man. You will only get yourself into serious difficulty, if you make the attempt."

Captain Garver grew almost black with rage. He realized that, as matters now stood, the advantage was really with the youths. They had their weapons out and leveled, while his men had not yet drawn theirs.

"If you will come outside, you cursed, insolent young puppy, I will give you one of the best thrashings you ever had!" the captain cried in a rage. He did not expect that the youth would accept his challenge, but the young fellow did so at once.

"Ah, you wish to fight me single-handed and alone, do you, captain?" he asked.

"Yes; and if you dare, I wish it to be with weapons!"

The captain's tone was vicious, but if he thought to intimidate the youth he was disappointed. It did not seem to have the least effect on him. "I accept your challenge and will fight you any way you like," was the reply; "you may name the weapons. I have no choice. Anything will suit me; fists, pistols, swords, muskets—just suit yourself and you will suit me."

"Good! Then I choose swords as the weapons! Come outside, if you dare, you rebel puppy, and I will spit you as I would a frog!"

"I am coming; but first I wish one thing understood."

"What is it?"

"That if I defeat you this young man shall not be bothered."

"I give you my word that he shall not be bothered, if you overcome me—which you will not!"

"But he will—he shall!" suddenly cried Daisy, leaping forward and standing by the youth's side. "He will defeat you, for I will be his mascot, and he cannot, he shall not fail!"

Impulsively the youth bent and kissed the beautiful girl full upon her ripe, red lips. "You are right, little sister," he said, "with you for my mascot I cannot fail. I will defeat the representative of a tyrant king; do not fear!"

"Very pretty!" sneered the captain. "Very pretty, indeed! But a dozen mascots could not save you, once you are in front of me, sword in hand. Come on, dog of a rebel!"

"Lead on, dog of a redcoat!"

CHAPTER III.

THE MASCOT IS A SUCCESS.

The captain and his four men led the way out of the house, followed by the daring youth who had bidden defiance to the minions of the king in such a bold manner and behind him came George, Daisy and Mr. and Mrs. Samuels.

"Can't this duel be stopped, father?" asked Mrs. Samuels, who feared the handsome and manly young stranger would meet with death at the hands of the redcoat.

"I don't think it would be possible to stop it, Martha," was the reply.

"Try, anyway," she half-whispered to him; "it would be dreadful if the brave young man should fall before the sword of the British captain!"

Mr. Samuels stepped forward, and, addressing the British captain, said: "What is the good of you and this young man fighting a duel? Nothing is to be gained by it, and considerable is to be lost, for one or the other may lose his life. Why not give up the idea of the meeting?"

"For the reason that he has interfered where he was not concerned, and because he has insulted me!" replied

Captain Garver. "There is no way out of it save for him to fight me. It is his life or mine!"

"Let him have his way, sir," said the young stranger, quietly; "you need have no fears for me. I have met more than one such boaster as he in my time, and have disposed of them without trouble. It will be the same thing over again when we meet with swords in hand."

"Bah! you are a great boaster!" sneered the captain.

"No, not a boaster. I am simply telling the truth, that is all."

"Bosh! Have you a sword?"

"I am sorry to say that I have not."

"One of my men will lend you a blade, then. Theirs are the same style as mine, so you will be as well armed as I."

"Very well; that will be satisfactory."

One of the redcoats drew his sword and handed it to the young man, who thanked him for it. "Now, there is one thing I wish understood," he said, as he made a stroke in the air with the weapon, to test its weight, "and that is, that your men are not to interfere when they see me getting the better of you."

"You need have no fears," was the scornful reply; "there will be no occasion for their interfering, for you will not get the better of me."

"You mustn't be too sure about these things, you know," the young man cautioned.

"Bah! there is no reason why I should not be sure regarding this matter, for I am a scienced and expert swordsman, while you are an ignorant American, a country bumpkin, who can know little or nothing regarding the gentleman's weapon."

"You will soon find that I know considerable about the weapon. Indeed, I have not the least doubt of my ability to teach you a number of tricks that you do not know, and which you have not, in fact, ever seen."

"Worse and worse! You are even more of a braggart than I thought you!"

"I assure you there is nothing of the braggart about me," was the quiet reply. "I simply mean what I say."

"Oh, no doubt you think you can do what you say; but that only proves that you are ignorant."

"You will soon see who is the ignorant one."

"Bah! let us stop this talk and get to work."

"I am quite willing."

"Very well; on guard, then!"

"Just a moment; I wish it understood that if I begin to get the better of you your men are not to interfere."

"They will not interfere under any circumstances."

"Give them that order."

The captain turned toward his men. "Boys," he said, "you are not to interfere in any way, no matter what happens, do you understand?"

The men nodded. "We understand," said one.

The young stranger turned to George Samuels. "George," he said, "keep them covered with your pistols, and if they make an attempt to interfere, shoot them!"

"All right; I'll do it!" was the reply.

George held his pistols in readiness and then the young and daring stranger turned and faced the British captain. "I'm ready," he said quietly.

"All right; look out for yourself!"

As he spoke Captain Garver began an attack on the youth. It was evident from the supercilious smile on his face and the manner in which he went to work that he held his adversary in utter contempt; but before they had been at it ten seconds the supercilious smile had disappeared. He had discovered that he was opposed to a man who understood the use of the sword.

The captain was surprised. He had not expected that the supposed green country youth could know anything regarding the use of the sword, and the knowledge that he did know how to handle the weapon like an expert was sufficient to amaze the redcoat. He at once began to try to force matters, as he did not wish the youth to make any showing before him on account of the fact that he prided himself on his skill with the weapon, and he would feel disgraced if his own men should see him held in check by a country bumpkin.

He quickly found that he could not gain anything by forcing matters, however; the stranger youth was ready for him, no matter what he did.

"Curse you! who taught you to handle the sword?" growled Captain Garver.

"A better swordsman than you!"

"'Tis false!"

"'Tis true!"

"There is not so good a swordsman in the entire rebel army as I."

"Oh, yes, there are lots who are better swordsmen than you."

"Who are they?"

"I am one."

"Bah!"

"You don't believe it?"

"No."

"Well, you will, before we are through with this little affair."

Clash, clash!

"Bah! I will run you through in a jiffy!"

"All right; go ahead and do it."

The stranger youth was cool and calm, and did not seem to be at all worried.

The spectators watched the combat in breathless interest. The four redcoats, of course, wished their captain to conquer; but the four Samuels wished the young stranger to be the victor. They wished it for a double reason. First, because if he won it would save George from capture.

Clash, clash, clash!

The weapons clashed together with great force, and the sparks flew from the high-tempered blades. It was give and take between the two, but after ten minutes had elapsed the captain began to show signs of weariness.

"Getting tired, captain?" the young man asked.

The British officer got very angry in an instant. "None of your business, you rebel dog!" he cried. "If you think I am tired why don't you go to work and run me through?"

"For the reason that I should despise to take advantage of you in that fashion."

"Oh, you think that would be taking advantage of me?"

"Yes."

"He would be glad of the chance to take advantage of you," said George Samuels.

"I judge you are right," replied the young stranger, "but I would not like to run him through after he has become so exhausted that he cannot protect himself."

"But I'm not in that condition yet!" cried the captain. "And I defy you to run me through! You could not do it in a hundred years."

"I could do it this moment if I wished," was the calm reply.

"It is false!"

"It is the truth."

"I say that it is not the truth!"

"I can prove it."

"Do so, then; I dare you to try it."

The youth made a quick feint, which the other, in guarding against, threw himself open, and then his opponent's sword darted forward and the point touched him just above the heart and just penetrated through the skin.

A cry of pain and rage escaped the captain. "It was an accident," he exclaimed; "you could not touch me again."

"I could have run you through, then, had I so desired, captain," was the quiet reply; "you had better acknowledge yourself beaten and withdraw from the contest."

"Withdraw from the contest—never! It is your life or mine!"

"You had better take my advice. It will be your life and not mine, I give you warning!"

"You are the biggest kind of a braggart."

"No, I am simply telling you plain truths."

"Bah! go ahead and do your worst. I am your superior with the sword, and I will soon prove it."

"You lack a great deal of being his equal!" exclaimed Daisy. "You had better take his advice and withdraw from the combat."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the officer, mockingly; "you are smart, young lady, but not smart enough. You are afraid your lover will be killed and would be only too glad to get me to quit."

"You are mistaken," came back the reply, quickly; "I am not afraid he will be killed. He cannot lose, for I am his mascot!"

"Oh, you are his mascot, eh?"

"I am."

"Well, mascot or no mascot, you can't keep him from falling by my hand."

"You will find out that you are mistaken."

"I have no fears regarding that."

"You would do well to have some fears regarding your captain," said his opponent, quietly; "I could finish you at any moment that I might take the notion to do it."

"I don't believe it," sneeringly. "You are just trying to get me to quit. If you can do so much why don't you go ahead and do it?"

"I guess I will have to do so; you seem unwilling to believe what we tell you, so I shall have to go in and make it plain enough so that even you cannot help admitting that such is the facts in the matter."

The young man at once began a fierce attack on the redcoat officer and forced him back, and back. The captain was forced to give ground, in spite of all he could do, and his face grew black with rage and chagrin at first, this giving way later to a deathly pallor as he began to realize that the youth was his master with the sword.

"Do you not now realize that I am your master?" asked the youth quietly.

"No," was the fierce reply; "I do not! You are not my master with the sword."

"Am I not? I will prove it so that all may see."

With these words the young man pressed the fight still harder and presently succeeded in getting a hold on the captain's sword with his own in such fashion that he was

enabled to jerk the weapon out of its owner's grasp and hurl it twenty feet away.

"Now, will you acknowledge that I am your master with the sword?" asked the youth quietly.

The captain did not reply in direct answer to the question, but glared at the youth for a few moments with a look of deadly hatred and said: "Run me through and end it!"

The youth shook his head. "I could not think of slaying an unarmed man," he said.

"Run me through, I tell you!" almost hissed the captain. "If you do not, I give you fair warning that you will see the day when you will wish that you had done so!"

Again the youth shook his head. "I would not think of such a thing," he said. "I have defeated you and that is sufficient. Now take your men and go your way in peace."

The captain stood there for half a minute, at least, glaring at his conqueror, and then without a word he turned and walked to where his sword lay, picked it up and put it in the scabbard, and then, turning to his men, said: "Come!"

The five made their way out to the road, mounted their horses and without another look toward the five people who were watching them rode away at a gallop.

"Oh, that was glorious!" cried Daisy, leaping forward and throwing her arms around the young man's neck and giving him a kiss. "That is to pay you for saving brother from those dreadful redcoats," she said, with a blush and a smile.

"Then I wish they would come back again and try to capture him once more," said the youth, with a smile; "or I wish some other gang would come along."

"Daisy! I am surprised at you!" said her mother, reprovingly, but the tone was not very severe. "You have set me a good example, however, so I guess I won't scold you very hard!" and she stepped forward and gave the youth a motherly kiss.

"You are a brave, noble boy!" she said. "Ah, but your mother must be proud of you!"

"Oh, you make too much of the little I did, Mrs. Samuels," the youth said, blushing clear through his coat of tan.

"No, indeed. It would be impossible to do that!" the woman insisted.

"We all owe you a great deal," said Mr. Samuels, shaking the youth's hand. "But for your interference the redcoats would have made a prisoner of George, and the

probabilities are that he would have been taken to Charleston and shot or hanged."

"Oh, that would have been dreadful!" shuddered Mrs. Samuels.

"I am of the opinion that I owe you my life!" said George, stepping forward and taking the youth's hand. "I thank you most sincerely for what you did for me."

"Don't say another word about it," said the youth, blushing; "you must understand that I am a patriot soldier, and that I am always glad of an opportunity to foil the British in any way. I was only too glad of the chance to do George, here, a favor, and at the same time get in a blow at the redcoats."

"And you vanquished the redcoat captain easily!" said Daisy proudly.

"That was because I had you for a mascot, Daisy," the youth said.

The girl blushed and looked pleased. "I am glad that I was your mascot," she said; "I shall be your mascot as long as you stay in this part of the country."

"Thank you, Daisy!" the youth said. "Then I shall have the best of success in everything I undertake, I know."

"I hope so."

"Now let's go back in the house and finish our dinner," suggested Mrs. Samuels.

The rest assented to this proposition, and, entering the house, they sat up to the table and went on with the meal as if nothing had occurred to disturb them.

Daisy kept looking at their guest and presently she said: "You said a while ago, before those redcoats came, that you had been in a number of real battles. Would you mind telling what ones you have been in? I should so like to know!"

"Certainly I will tell you," was the reply; "I can name some of the principal ones."

"Oh, do, please!"

"Let me see," reflectively, "I might as well begin at the beginning. I was in the battle of Long Island, Harlem Heights, White Plains, Fort Washington, Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth, beside a score of smaller battles."

"Goodness! you are a veteran!" exclaimed Daisy, in admiration.

"Well, yes, I suppose I am. I have been at it steadily for three years now."

George Samuels had been studying the youth for some time, and presently he said: "Excuse me, old fellow, but I more than half believe you are more than you make out yourself to be. Is it not so?"

"What do you mean?" the young man asked.

"Why, I mean that I believe you are some noted person in the patriot army. If so, tell us; for we are true friends, and will not betray you. We would like to know who you really are—for somehow I don't believe that your name is George Samuels."

The others were looking at their guest eagerly and inquiringly, and Daisy's look was beseeching in the extreme. Presently she spoke:

"Oh, do tell us; please do!" she pleaded. "If George is right, tell us so and tell us who you really are."

The young man laughed. "I can't refuse my mascot anything," he said, "so I will tell you. George is right. My name is not George Samuels. That is a name I took for the purpose of making my identity unknown, and you may be sure I was surprised, and a bit taken aback when I found that you folks were named Samuels, and that you even had a son named George. I was afraid you would think my name a fictitious one—but that was before I knew you were patriots. I don't care if you do know it now, of course, since learning that you are patriots and my friends."

"But what is your name?" asked Daisy eagerly. Girl-like, her curiosity was aroused and she could not rest until it was satisfied.

"You wish to know what my name is?" with a smile.

"Yes, yes; tell us, quick!"

"Very well, I will do so. My name is Dick Slater."

"Dick Slater!" cried the three in chorus.

"The captain of the company of 'Liberty Boys'?" cried George.

"Yes, Dick Slater, the captain of 'The Liberty Boys of '76.'"

CHAPTER IV.

BAD NEWS.

To say that the members of the Samuels family were surprised when they learned that their guest was the famous Dick Slater, is stating the case mildly, indeed. They had heard many stories of the youth and of his wonderful work as a spy and scout. They were aware of the fact that he had earned, and had been given the name or title of "The Champion Spy of the Revolution." They had heard, too, wonderful stories of the daring and desperate work of the "Liberty Boys" on the field of battle.

"Well, well! We never expected to see you, Mr. Slater," said Mr. Samuels.

"No, indeed; we did not expect that you would ever come down South," from Mrs. Samuels.

"But we are glad to see and know you!" said Daisy, her eyes shining with pleasure.

"Thank you," said Dick; "you folks do me too much honor, I am sure."

"No, no; that would not be possible," said Daisy.

"Don't you know," said George, "I have been confident from the first moment I set eyes on you, Dick, that you were some noted patriot."

Dick smiled. "What made you think so, George?" he asked.

"Why, your looks and actions."

"In what way did I look or act like some person of that kind, George?"

"I can't explain it in words, but you impressed me that way. I said to myself at once that you were a soldier, for your bearing was that of a soldier, and there was a look of determination and of confidence on your face that indicated experience, and I was sure that you were a veteran."

Dick laughed. "You are a close observer, my boy," he said. "If you saw those things you have a very sharp pair of eyes, for I never observed them myself."

"Well, a fellow isn't the best judge of himself in such things, you know."

"No, I suppose not."

Dick was anxious to get the conversation into other channels, so he asked: "How far is it to Savannah?"

"About six miles," replied George.

"And General Prevost is in charge of the garrison there?"

"Yes; and he is a mean man, too."

"He is?"

"Yes. Oh, he's awfully mean!" said Daisy, who wished to have some hand in the conversation. "Why, since he took command at Savannah the redcoats have done more damage than during all the rest of the time of the war."

"In the way of foraging, you mean?"

"Yes, in the way of pillaging, robbing, and, in many cases, burning."

"So he is that kind of a man, is he?"

"Yes."

"There are too many such men in America in command of British forces," said Dick; "they seem to think that American people are legitimate prey."

"Yes, that is certainly the way General Prevost looks at it."

They had finished their meal now and were just getting up from the table when there came the sound of rapid hoofbeats, and all hastened to the door to see who was coming. The fear had come to them that more redcoats were approaching.

Such was not the case, however, for there was only one person coming, and he was a young man of not more than twenty years. He was evidently a young farmer of the neighborhood, judging by his clothing. And such he was, for Dick saw that his friends knew the newcomer.

"It's Frank!" cried Daisy, in a tone of delight; and then she suddenly stopped and gave Dick a peculiar glance, which he saw and wondered at.

"It is Frank, sure enough!" said George. "I wonder what he is in such a hurry for?"

They stepped out of doors as the young man rode up, and as he leaped to the ground he called out: "How are you all? I bring bad news."

"What is it?" cried Mr. and Mrs. Samuels in unison.

"The British are coming!"

"The British?"

"Yes."

"How many of the British, Frank?" asked George.

"Nearly the whole army that has been in Savannah."

"What?"

"You don't mean it?"

"What does it mean?"

Such were the exclamations and queries, but Dick had remained silent, listening.

"I think I know what it means," said the young man.

"What?" this from Mr. Samuels.

"The British are marching on Charleston; they are going to try to capture the city."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it. What else would the entire army be marching this way for?"

The others nodded their heads. "I believe you are right, Frank," said George; "there would be no other reason for practically the whole army marching in this direction."

"It looks suspicious, to say the least," said Mr. Samuels.

"What do you think about it, Mr. Slater?" asked Daisy, turning to Dick.

"Well, I rather think the young man is right," was Dick's reply.

The young man looked at Dick curiously, and then he glanced quickly and somewhat searchingly at Daisy. Dick noted this and the thought came to him that this young fellow was Daisy's lover. "He seems to be a nice sort of

chap," the youth thought; "well, he ought to be if he is to get such a prize as Daisy. She is one of the finest girls I ever saw, and no mistake."

"I forgot you two don't know each other," said George; "Frank, this is Mr. Dick Slater, the famous patriot scout and spy, and the captain of 'The Liberty Boys of '76.' Dick, this is Frank Forrest, a true patriot, and a fine young fellow—if you don't believe that, ask sis!" with a mischievous glance toward Daisy.

The girl blushed like a peony. "George!" she said, half angrily, "you mustn't try to be so funny! We all know that Frank is a patriot and a fine fellow, so why single me out to testify to the fact?"

"Well, I thought you would be the most willing one to testify," with a grin. George did not know it, but he had ruffled his sister's feelings considerable, for she, while she had been keeping company with Frank Forrest, was not engaged to him and had not made up her mind that she really loved him; and now that she had seen Dick Slater she had about made up her mind that he was more to her notion than Frank was. Hence she was embarrassed by her brother's speech, for she did not want Dick to think that there was anything between her and Frank.

As for Frank Forrest, he was a rather bright, keen fellow, and it was evident that he did not fancy the way Daisy acted. He was naturally a gentlemanly fellow, however, and he put his fears and disturbing thoughts behind him and acknowledged the introduction heartily, shaking hands with Dick and telling him that he was glad to make his acquaintance.

"I have heard of you," he said, "but I never expected to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance."

"I had business down in this part of the country," was the reply, "and I must say that I am glad I came. I like it down here, first-rate."

Then the conversation returned to the subject of the British, and Dick asked a number of questions, all of which Frank answered promptly.

"What do you think of the matter, Mr. Slater?" asked Mr. Samuels.

"Well, I must say that I don't like the looks of things at all, sir," was the reply; "Mr. Forrest says that the soldiers under Prevost are pillaging and burning as they come, and I fear that there will be a great deal of trouble."

"I am afraid so," was the sober reply.

"Is this house on the main road—the road the redcoats will travel in going to Charleston?" asked Dick.

"Yes; they will go right in front of our door."

"Then, in my opinion, you had better pack up all port-

able valuables and get away from here in a hurry," the youth said. "They will be along here in an hour and a half at the least and then if you are here you may get into serious trouble."

"Let us do that at once, father!" said Mrs. Samuels, who was pale.

"I judge that we had better," was the reply; "it won't do to stay here and try to defy the entire British army."

"But where will we go, father?" asked Daisy.

"We will have to take to the swamp."

"Goodness! that will be terrible!"

"Not so bad as death at the hands of the redcoats, Daisy."

"No, that is true."

"Have your folks left their home yet, Frank?" asked Mrs. Samuels.

"They were packing up such things as they could carry and getting ready to leave when I came away," was the reply.

"And where are they going?"

"To the swamp."

"Well, maybe we will find them there."

"It is likely."

"I hope so; for then it won't seem so terrible if we have company."

"Misery likes company, they say," said Dick, smiling.

"That is a true saying, too, I think," said Mrs. Samuels.

Then they went into the house and began the work of packing up such portable things as they wished to take with them. This was the work of half an hour, and just as they were about ready to start an exclamation escaped the lips of George Samuels.

"Look!" he cried. "Yonder come a party of horsemen! They are coming from the north. I wonder who they can be?"

All looked in the direction indicated, and saw that George had spoken truly. A party of horsemen, to the number of about a hundred, was coming down the road. The horsemen rode like soldiers, but they did not have on uniforms. They were dressed in citizen's clothing.

"Goodness! I wonder who they can be?" exclaimed Daisy, and then as she noted a peculiar smile on Dick's face she added: "I believe you know who they are, Mr. Slater! Please tell us if you do."

"Yes, I know who they are," he replied.

"Who?" eagerly, while the others looked at him curiously and eagerly.

"Those are my own men," said Dick quietly.

"You don't mean to say that they are 'The Liberty Boys of '76'?" cried George Samuels.

"Yes," with a smile, "they are 'The Liberty Boys of '76.'"

CHAPTER V.

THE "LIBERTY BOYS" MASCOT.

When Dick said this his new friends stared at him in amazement. They were taken entirely by surprise.

"You didn't say a word about them being on their way here," said George.

"No, I wished to surprise you."

"Well, you have succeeded."

"But I am glad they are here!" cried Daisy. "Will they remain in this part of the country, Mr. Slater?"

"I think that they will," was the reply, "for a while, at any rate. We will see what we can do to worry General Prevost and his army of redcoats."

"Oh, goody!" cried Daisy. "And I will be the mascot of the company, Dick—Mr. Slater!"

Frank Forrest gave Daisy a quick look and then he glanced at Dick. It was evident that he suspected that Daisy liked the handsome "Liberty Boy," and he was fearful that he might lose his chances of becoming the husband of the girl whom he loved. But he was a sensible, manly fellow, and he did not say a word.

"If she likes him better than she does me, it is my misfortune, but none of my business," he said to himself. "I won't give up without a struggle, but if I can't win her, I can't, and that is all there is about that."

"Nothing would please me more than to have you be the mascot for the company of 'Liberty Boys,' Miss Daisy!" said Dick, in reply to the girl's last words. "The boys will be delighted, I am sure; and they will fight to the death rather than that you should be made feel bad over their defeat."

"Oh, goody, goody! I'm going to be the mascot of the company!" the girl cried, jumping up and down in her excitement.

The "Liberty Boys" were at the gate, now, and recognizing Dick they gave a cheer and then lifted their hats and bowed to the ladies of the party.

"How far is it from here to the swamp you are going to enter?" asked Dick.

"About half a mile," replied Mr. Samuels.

"Good! then I'll tell you what we will do: Here are a hundred strapping fellows, ready and willing to work. We will simply take all the portable furniture out of your house and carry it to the swamp. We can do it easily before the redcoats put in an appearance."

"That would be splendid," said Mrs. Samuels; "but it will be asking too much of you and your men, Mr. Slater."

"Not a bit of it! That is what we are down here for—to render all possible assistance to the patriot people of this part of the country, and we will get to work at once."

Dick hastened out to the fence and explained matters to the "Liberty Boys," who at once leaped to the ground, tied their horses and entered the yard. Dick introduced them as a whole to the Samuelses and Frank Forrest, and then the work of stripping the house was begun.

This did not take long with so many at work. In fact, fifteen minutes after the work was begun the house was stripped and everything was out in the yard. Another fifteen minutes and a strange-looking cavalcade made its way toward the timber a quarter of a mile distant.

There were one hundred horses, and many of them were laden with articles of furniture and bric-a-brac. Many of the youths were carrying smaller articles and breakable furniture, such as mirrors, etc., and the cavalcade looked something like pictures of caravans crossing the desert of Sahara.

It did not take long to reach the timber, and then a few minutes later they had reached the swamp. Mr. Samuels was in the lead, acting as guide, and he conducted the party safely along the winding, narrow pathway leading through the swamp, and finally brought it out safely on an island of twenty acres in extent.

"This will afford us a safe retreat, I think," he said. "So far as I know there is only the one path leading to this island, and a dozen men could hold it against Prevost's entire army."

"This will make a splendid headquarters for my company of 'Liberty Boys,' then," said Dick.

"Yes, you could not find a better or more safe spot anywhere in the vicinity, I am confident," was the reply.

"Good! and I'll tell you what we will do: We will go to work and build a cabin for your family, Mr. Samuels."

"That will be quite a job, Mr. Slater."

"Not for a hundred strong, sturdy fellows, who were raised in the timber, and know how to wield an axe."

"That is true; it won't be such a big job."

"Certainly not; and there are plenty of good, large trees growing on the island."

"Yes, there is plenty of material to work on."

"But before we build the house we will wait and see if they burn your own house. It may be that they won't be so mean as to do that, in which case if you only have to remain here a week or so it will be hardly worth while to go to the trouble of building a house."

"That is the way I look at it; but I am afraid they will burn the house. You know, they are aware of the fact that I am a patriot, and that my son is a member of Sumpter's band, and they will not spare the house."

"I judge that you are right; we will wait and see what they do, however. And if my 'Liberty Boys' get a chance they will deal the redcoats a blow that they will not soon forget."

"I hope you will be able to do so."

"Oh, you will be able to do so, I am sure, Dick!" said Daisy, who had overheard the conversation. "I am your mascot, you know."

"That is right, Miss Daisy," said Dick, smiling and bowing; "and that makes me think. Come over here with me and I will tell the boys about the matter."

The girl went with him and blushing faced the hundred handsome, stalwart youths who looked at her admiringly and then at Dick inquiringly.

"Boys," he said, "I wish to make you all acquainted with Miss Daisy Samuels, who is to be our mascot so long as we are in this part of the country. I am confident that she will bring us good luck in all our work, and now, three cheers for Miss Daisy, the mascot of the company!"

Instantly every hat was off; and waving the hats in the air the "Liberty Boys" gave three cheers for the mascot. When they had finished the beautiful girl bowed, and, blushing, said:

"I thank you for accepting me as your mascot, and I will do my best to bring you good luck."

"You can't help bringing us good luck!" cried Bob Estabrook, an irrepressible young fellow, and Dick's especial friend and right-hand man. "In fact, we are in the greatest kind of luck to have such a beautiful girl for a mascot to start with—eh, fellows?"

"That's right!" was the cry in chorus.

"You see, the boys are delighted, Daisy," said Dick. "You may be sure that it will go hard with the redcoats whom they run up against from now on. They will fight like demons before they will give up and acknowledge themselves defeated."

"I shall be glad to be an incentive to aid them in fighting their hardest," the girl said; "but I hope they won't be reckless and rash on my account."

"Oh, you need have no fears on that score."

Then they went back to where Daisy's parents were, and Frank Forrest was there. He looked somewhat sad, but smiled when he encountered the gaze of Daisy.

"Aren't you glad I am to have a part to play in the fight for freedom and independence, Frank?" exclaimed the girl.

"Yes, Daisy," was the quiet reply, "I am glad. I hope you will be a great success as a mascot, and I have no doubt you will be. At any rate, I know that I should be able to fight to the death if I had you for my mascot!"

"Why, you have me for your mascot," the girl said; "join Mr. Slater's company and then you will be under my dominion."

"I think I shall do so if Mr. Slater will have me."

"I shall be only too glad to have you join us, Mr. Forrest," said Dick; "and if you wish to leave us when we go away from this part of the country, that will be all right."

"Thank you!"

"And I believe I will join your company, too, Dick," said George Samuels.

"But what about Sumpter, George?" asked his mother.

"I will go and report to him to-morrow and ask that he let me withdraw from his force and join the 'Liberty Boys,' mother; and I am confident that he will be willing for me to do so."

"Very well; but I would not wish you to leave him without his consent."

"I wouldn't do that, of course, mother, as it would be practically the same as deserting."

Just then an exclamation escaped the lips of Frank Forrest. "There come my folks!" he cried. "I didn't know they intended coming here."

"Well, I am glad they are coming here, Frank!" exclaimed Mrs. Samuels. "It will make us less lonesome, you know."

"True; well, it will be a good thing for them, for if the 'Liberty Boys' are going to make this their headquarters, my folks will be safer here than they would be anywhere else."

"So they will."

It was indeed the Forrest family, of whom there were five besides Frank. They were Mr. and Mrs. Forrest, Tom, aged twelve, and Lucy and Jennie, aged sixteen and eighteen, respectively. When they found the Samuels folks they were delighted. They greeted one another joyously.

"We were frightened when we first reached the island and saw so many strange men here," said Mrs. Forrest,

"but father said he believed he recognized you folks, so we risked it and came forward."

"Well, we are glad you came to this island," said Mrs. Samuels; "it will not seem so bad now that you are here."

"It will be much more pleasant for us, too; but who are the young men?"

Mrs. Samuels told her that the young men were the famous "Liberty Boys," of whom they had all heard, and the members of the Forrest family were delighted when they learned that the youths were going to make the island their headquarters, and that they would thus afford the two families protection from the redcoats.

"And I am the mascot of the company of 'Liberty Boys'!" said Daisy, with sparkling eyes.

This attracted the attention of Lucy and Jennie at once, and they asked a number of questions regarding the matter. "Goodness, I wish I could be a mascot, too!" said Lucy, her eyes shining with eagerness and excitement. "Can't I be a mascot, too, Daisy?"

Daisy shook her head. "No, there can be only one mascot for a company of any kind," she replied. "If there were two it would spoil all."

"I don't see why it should," said the girl, a look of discontent on her face.

"Why, of course it would spoil all, you little silly!" said her sister Jennie. "Daisy is the mascot, so what do you want to be one for?"

"Well, I should think I would be as good a mascot as anybody," the girl said, poutingly.

"I don't doubt that you would, Lucy," said Daisy, "but you see, they never have more than one mascot, so there is no chance for you."

The other was silent a few moments, evidently pondering, and then she said: "Mayn't I be mascot part of the time?"

"That wouldn't do at all, Lucy," said her sister. "Stop your silly talk."

"I'll tell you what we will do, Lucy," said Daisy, who sympathized with the girl, "if it should happen that at any time I should be unable to act as mascot, then you may act in my place. How does that suit you?"

The girl's face brightened. That will suit me first-rate," she said. "I know that I would be a good mascot for a company of soldiers, for I am a good rider and could go anywhere that they could go."

"Yes, and you would faint if you were within a mile of a battle!" said Jennie, derisively. "I guess you had better let Daisy do the mascot work."

"I am going to be mascot if at any time Daisy can't act," was the determined reply.

Dick Slater now told his "Liberty Boys" to mount their horses and follow him. "We will go back to the main road and hide in the vicinity of Mr. Samuels' house," he said; "and then, if we get a chance, we will strike the redcoats a blow as they go along."

This plan met with the approval of the youths, and they hastened to mount. Frank Forrest and George Samuels mounted their horses and the party was about to set out when Daisy Samuels came running forward and she called out: "You must not go without your mascot, Mr. Slater! Wait till father saddles my horse and I will go with you."

Dick looked inquiringly at Daisy's brother George, and he said: "Let her come."

"Very well; we will wait, Miss Daisy. You must keep well toward the rear of the party, however."

"Yes, our mascot mustn't be where she will be in danger," said Bob.

The horse was soon ready and Dick assisted Daisy to mount. Then the party set out, and half an hour later the edge of the timber, at a point opposite the Samueles house, was reached.

The youths uttered exclamations as they looked, for the redcoats were on hand and were at work. They had set fire to the house and were watching it burn. The entire army was in sight, and it would have been an act of folly for the youths to try to make an attack.

"The cowardly scoundrels!" grated George. "Now, what use is there for the burning of houses? Why can't they go along about their business and let such work alone?"

"Because they wish to do all the harm they can, I guess," replied Dick.

"Well, it is a mighty mean way to do it!"

Tears came into the eyes of Daisy as she watched the house in which she was born go up in smoke. "My dear old home!" she murmured.

"The house can be replaced," said Dick; "they can't burn up the land."

"No; but they would if they could."

"I have no doubt of that."

"What are we to do, Dick?" asked Bob, who was never willing to remain silent or still a moment, if he could help it.

"I don't know, Bob."

"Well, let's do something."

"What can we do?"

"I don't know; but I should think you could think of something."

"Perhaps I may be able to do so sooner or later. Just

now, however, the best thing I can think of is for us to stay where we are and play the role of spectators."

"I never was any good at that sort of thing," said Bob; "I want to be up and hustling."

"We may be able to do some of that kind of work before we are through with this affair."

"I hope so."

The first company of redcoats had been the ones to set the house on fire, and as they marched away the next company came along and cheered as they passed.

"Let them cheer!" grated George Samuels. "They think they have done something wonderful in setting fire to the house, but we'll teach them different before we get through with them!"

Company after company of the redcoats marched past the burning house, and on after the other companies until there was only one company yet to pass. This company, when it reached the house paused to watch it burn. Doubtless they wished to see the structure collapse. Be that as it may, they paused and stood leaning on their guns watching the fire.

Dick looked at his comrades. "I think this is our opportunity," he said; "mount and charge the redcoats, boys!"

Instantly the youths leaped to obey. They mounted in silence and rode to the edge of the timber, then at a word from Dick they dashed out from among the trees and straight toward the redcoats.

The British were looking in the opposite direction, their back being toward the approaching youths, and they did not know that danger threatened until startled by the thrilling cry:

"Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

They whirled, then, and received a volley fair in their faces—a terrible, withering volley it was, too!

CHAPTER VI.

A LIVELY ENCOUNTER.

To say that the redcoats were surprised is stating the case very mildly. They were almost paralyzed with amazement. The thing farthest from their thoughts was that they might be in danger from an enemy, and now to suddenly receive a volley from a hundred muskets at close range, when they had not thought there was such a force of "rebels" within a hundred miles, was enough to startle and amaze them.

At least forty of the redcoats went down, dead or wounded, and before the rest could lift their muskets to fire the terrible riders were upon them. The "Liberty Boys" bayoneted many, many more were knocked down and trampled under foot by the horses, while others had been knocked senseless by blows from the butts of the muskets.

It was a scene of terrible confusion, and the redcoats knew not what to do. More than half their number was down and many of the others were wounded so as to make them not able to fight, so the thought that came to them was that they must flee for their lives.

They started to do this, but could not escape the terrible enemy, for the youths whirled their well-trained horses and again dashing in among the redcoats put half their number on the ground and scattered the rest like chaff before the wind.

By this time the main army of redcoats had discovered what was going on, and the redcoats were coming back as fast as they could run, to help their comrades. Seeing that they would be too greatly outnumbered to make it advisable that they should try to offer fight, Dick gave the order to retreat.

The order was obeyed, and the "Liberty Boys" hastened to ride back to the timber at the edge of which, seated upon the back of her horse, was Daisy. She was waving her handkerchief, and as the youths drew near she cried out:

"Oh, you won! you won! Goody, goody! I am so glad! I am a good mascot, sure enough! You won, you won!"

"Yes, we won; and you are a good mascot!" replied Dick. "Three cheers for Daisy Samuels, our mascot, boys!"

The cheers were given with a will, the youths waving their hats in time to the cheering, and the redcoats stared in amazement. When they saw what havoc had been made with the company of soldiers, however, their anger knew no bounds, and the officer in command yelled for them to charge the "rebels!"

They obeyed, and came rushing toward where the youths sat on their horses. But Dick was too smart to allow himself to be taken at a disadvantage, and he gave the order for the youths to dismount. They did so, and then a dozen or so of the youths took charge of the horses, and hastened to lead them through the timber in the direction of the swamp, while the main body of "Liberty Boys" remained behind and prepared to give the redcoats a warm reception.

Acting under Dick's instructions, Daisy went with the youths who were taking the horses away.

Forward rushed the redcoats. Doubtless they thought

the entire party of "rebels" had taken flight. They did not for a moment think that they would be so foolhardy as to stop and try to show fight when they saw five or six times their own number coming.

They did not know the "Liberty Boys," however, and were soon to learn their mistake.

When the redcoats were within one hundred feet of the edge of the timber they were treated to a volley which had the effect of causing them to slacken the speed at which they were advancing. A score of their number went down, dead or wounded, and their cries and groans, and the wild yells of those who had been wounded, but not sufficiently to put them down, made the scene an exciting one, to say the least.

By the time the redcoats got straightened up and recovered from the demoralization into which the unexpected volley had thrown them, they were given another. This did not demoralize them so greatly as the other had done, for they now knew that the enemy was there, but almost as much damage had been done by the "Liberty Boys' " bullets.

"Charge!" roared the British commander, waving his sword. "Charge, and fire as you go!"

The British soldiers obeyed the order, and knowing that it would be suicidal to try to stand their ground, Dick gave the order to retreat. This the youths did, and here again, although the British fired a volley, the young fellows escaped injury, for they did not retreat in a body. Instead, they went individually, every fellow for himself, and by so doing were enabled to take advantage of the shelter afforded by the trees. They were born woodsmen, and had no trouble in protecting themselves, so were enabled to get clear away out of range of the muskets and pistols of the British.

The "Liberty Boys" kept on retreating, and caught up with the youths who had charge of the horses, just as they reached the pathway leading into the swamp. Each youth took charge of his own horse, and, with Daisy in the lead, they rode across to the island.

They were greeted joyously by the members of the Samuels and Forrest families, and when they told how they had gotten the better of the British, without losing a single one of their own men, the folks were delighted.

"And it was all owing to me acting as their mascot!" cried Daisy, with shining eyes. "Mr. Slater himself says so, and he ought to know."

"We all say so!" cried Bob Estabrook. "I tell you, if Miss Daisy will continue acting as our mascot we will be able to almost wipe out the British army!"

The other "Liberty Boys" said the same. The fact of the matter was that almost all the youths had fallen in love with Daisy, and were more than willing to attribute their good luck in the encounter with the redcoats to the presence of the beautiful girl. Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook and a few of the youths, had sweethearts up North, but the majority were heart whole, and they were ready to idolize the beautiful Southern girl.

This pleased Daisy, and she was ready to act as mascot at a moment's notice. Lucy and Jennie Forrest were a bit jealous on account of the wonderful popularity of Daisy, and talked it over between themselves when they were alone.

"I think Daisy is too proud, altogether!" said Lucy.

"Well, I think she ought to be a little bit less forward," said Jennie; "I don't believe that Frank likes the way she is doing."

"Humph! Little she cares whether Frank likes it or not. She is struck with the face of that Dick Slater, or I miss my guess!"

"Do you really think so, Lucy?"

"I am sure of it. She seems to think that whatever he says is all right."

"Yes, I've noticed that."

"Well, if she wants to throw Frank over for a Northerner, all right. She will be sorry for it, though, I am sure."

"Maybe she won't do that."

"I hope not, for Frank is foolish enough to think a great deal of Daisy."

When Mr. and Mrs. Samuels were told that their house was in flames, a sad look appeared on their faces. "Never mind, though, Martha, we can build another house," said Mr. Samuels, consolingly.

"Yes, it isn't as bad as it might have been, John. We saved all our furniture, and we might have lost it as well as the house."

"True; we can rebuild, move the furniture and things back, and be in comfortable shape once more."

Dick now gave orders for the "Liberty Boys" to help fix up things so that a comfortable permanent camp would be had, and then he took his departure, telling Bob that he was going on a scouting expedition.

"I want to see what the redcoats do and whether or not they leave any part of their force in this vicinity," he said.

"I am a bit suspicious that they may detail a couple of hundred of the soldiers to remain in this vicinity to try to get a blow in on us; and if so, I wish to know it and turn the tables on them if possible."

"Well, be careful, old man," said Bob; "don't let them take you prisoner."

"I'll be careful, Bob."

Dick took his departure, and, crossing to the mainland, made his way slowly and cautiously through the timber. He stopped occasionally and took a careful survey of the surroundings, as he did not wish to run into an ambush.

He at last reached the vicinity of the spot, near the edge of the timber, where the second encounter with the redcoats had taken place, and was standing behind a large tree, peering around it, and looking at some redcoats who were digging graves for their dead comrades, just beyond the edge of the timber, when he suddenly heard footsteps behind him. He whirled on the instant and found himself face to face with a redcoat!

CHAPTER VII.

THE MYSTERIOUS VOICE.

The redcoat leaped forward and seized hold of Dick, as the youth turned. The fellow made no cry to attract the attention of his comrades, and in this he made a mistake. It is hard to say why he did not cry out and summon assistance; perhaps he wished the credit of capturing the rebel spy alone and unaided. Be that as it may he did not give the alarm, and this gave Dick the opportunity of doing some very good work for himself and the cause.

He grappled with the redcoat and succeeded, after a bit of feinting, in getting the fellow by the throat. This was the hold that Dick wished to secure, and once he had secured it he felt that the victory was won, for he possessed an iron grip, and he had never yet encountered the man who could escape from the grip once he secured it, or who could cry out.

The struggle was taking place within fifty yards of where the redcoats were at work, but so little noise did the combatants make that they were not heard and were left to fight it out between themselves.

It did not take very long to wind the affair up, for a man cannot hold his breath much more than a minute, and the redcoat, being unable to get his breath, speedily lapsed into a state of insensibility.

Dick now went to work and removed the redcoat's uniform. Doffing his own outer clothing, he donned the uniform. Then he bound the insensible man's arms and legs and gagged him, after which he carried the fellow back into the timber a distance of fifty yards and hid the body in a hollow tree. He hid his own clothing there, also, and

then he hastened by a roundabout course and joined the redcoats where they were at work near the burned house.

In doing this Dick was taking chances, but he figured it that the redcoats did not know one another, excepting where they were members of the same company, and that he would not be noticed on account of the fact that he was not known to many of them.

In this reasoning he seemed to be correct, for no notice was taken of him, and he managed to get around near where several of the officers were standing, talking.

Dick wished to hear what they were saying, and was successful. He found that they were discussing the affair, and learned that the officers were puzzled. They could not think who the "rebels" could be that had attacked them so savagely, and who had done so much damage.

One of the officers thought it was Sumpter's band; another said it must have been Marion's band, while others doubted it being either.

"There were too many of them," said one; "and they were all young fellows and dressed exactly alike."

"Well, who can they be, then, if not Sumpter's or Marion's band?" asked one.

"I'll tell what I more than half suspect," was the reply.

"What?"

"Did you hear their war-cry as they charged the men, in the first place?" was the counter-query.

"Yes."

"What was it?"

"Let me see. Ah, yes, now I recall it. It was, 'Down with the King! Long live Liberty!'"

The other nodded. "You are right," he said; "that was the cry, and that is the battle-cry of——"

"Whom?"

"The Liberty Boys of '76!'"

"What!"

"You don't mean it?"

"Surely you are joking!"

"Why, the 'Liberty Boys,' as they are called, are in the North with Washington's army!"

Such were a few of the exclamations.

The officer only smiled and looked knowing. "I tell you, it was the 'Liberty Boys!'" he declared. "They have been in the North, I know, but what is to hinder them from coming South?"

"Nothing to hinder, if they wished to do so, I suppose," one replied; "but why should they come away down here?"

"Well, that is a question which I can't answer, of course, but I am confident those fellows were the chaps known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76.'"

"Of course, it is possible," said another; "but I think it rather improbable."

"Well, I don't. I would be willing to wager that they are no others than the 'Liberty Boys.' The wonderful manner in which they fought, and the very daring of their attack in the first place is characteristic of the 'Liberty Boys.'"

"How do you know so much about them?"

"I have a brother in the Northern army, at New York, with General Clinton, and he has seen Dick Slater, the captain of the company of 'Liberty Boys,' a number of times, and has been in engagements where the youths were in the battle, and has seen them fight. He wrote me about them and told me that their battle-cry was, 'Down with the king! Long live Liberty!' and the instant I heard that cry to-day I made up my mind that we had run up against the famous 'Liberty Boys.'"

"Well, the question now is, what are we going to do? Shall we let this audacious piece of business go unnoticed and unpunished?"

"No, I'm in for getting after the scoundrels, red-hot."

"And so am I!"

"And I, too!"

"Well, I'll tell what we will do," said one; "General Prevost is very angry on account of this affair, and he told me to do what I saw fit to do, so I think I shall leave two hundred men in this vicinity for the purpose of hunting those rebels down, and either killing them all or capturing them, or both."

"That is a good plan," said one.

"Yes, indeed!" from another.

The others signified their approval of the plan, and when at last the dead redcoats had been buried, two full companies were detailed to remain behind and make a thorough search for the party of "rebels" that had created such havoc in the British ranks.

Dick had learned all that he wished to learn, and began edging away. He wanted to get away before the rest of the force went on to rejoin the main army, for he would be called upon to march with the rest, otherwise. He had managed to get away a distance of fifty yards when one of the officers called to him: "Here, you idiot!" he cried, "where are you going?"

"I lost my canteen," was the reply of Dick, who happened to think of the right thing to say, "and I must find it. I believe I must have dropped it over near the edge of the timber."

"Well, hurry and find it, for we haven't any time to waste."

This was just what Dick wanted, and he hastened toward the timber. He paused just before he reached it and began making a pretense of searching here and there, on the ground, but gradually edged nearer the timber. When he reached the edge he entered the timber and walked rapidly to where he had left the redcoat a prisoner.

The fellow was where he had been left, but was now conscious. He stared at Dick wonderingly, but of course could not say anything as he was gagged.

Dick disarmed the redcoat and then dragged him forth from the hollow tree. "I am going to take the gag out of your mouth," he said. "Some of your comrades will be along here in a few minutes, and you can call to them and they will free you. I wish you would tell the commander of the party that will be along that Dick Slater extends his compliments, and warns him to get away with his force. If he remains in this neighborhood it will result in his men losing their lives or in their being captured. Will you tell him?"

The other nodded, and then when Dick took the gag out of his mouth he asked: "Are you Dick Slater?"

"I am," was the reply.

"I'm glad to know it," the redcoat said; "it takes away some of the sting of my defeat at your hands. I have heard of you as being a wonderful fellow, both in battle and as an opponent in single combat. I don't wonder now that Captain Garver got the worst of it in the duel which you fought with him this afternoon at the farmhouse."

Dick now looked at the man closer and recognized him as being one who had been with the British captain whom he had defeated in the sword duel at the home of the Samuels.

"Ah, I recognize you now," Dick said; "you were with the captain."

"Yes; and he was one of the maddest men I ever saw. He made some terrible threats against you, and if he gets a chance will do you serious injury."

"I have no doubt regarding that," said Dick, with a smile; "but I am not going to let him have the chance at me if I can help it."

Dick now took his departure, but went only a short distance. He hid himself where he could see the redcoat, and waited. Fifteen minutes later the party of two hundred British soldiers came along, and when they found their comrade lying there on the ground, trussed up like a turkey, their amazement knew no bounds.

"What does this mean, Inglesby?" asked Captain Garver, who, as it happened, was in charge of the party. "How came you here, tied up in this fashion?"

"That's easy enough answered," was the reply; "do you remember that fellow you fought the duel with over at the farmhouse this afternoon?"

"Of course I remember him—curses on him!" with a dark frown. "But what has that to do with your being tied up here in this fashion?"

"Everything to do with it."

"I don't know what you mean."

"I mean that it was that young fellow who tied me up in this fashion."

"What!" cried the captain, laying his hand on a pistol butt and staring around him. "You don't mean it?"

"Yes, I mean it."

"And you say that young scoundrel tied you up?"

"Yes; and took my uniform, leaving me with only my underclothing, as you see."

"The impudent young scoundrel! But how did it happen? He must have taken you at a big disadvantage."

"No, it was a fair and square fight, and I got the worst of it."

"Jove! he must be a good man! I don't see how he ever managed to get the better of you, Inglesby. You are counted one of the best athletes in the regiment."

"Well, he did it. It was his terrible grip that did the work. Jove! I can feel his fingers on my throat yet!" and he felt of his throat gingerly.

"The marks are there, too, Inglesby," said the captain. "He must have choked you in good shape."

"Choked me till I was unconscious."

"Well, well! He is a dangerous fellow, it seems."

"Dangerous? Well, I should say he is dangerous! And, by the way, captain, do you have any suspicion who that young fellow is?"

"No," in surprise; "why do you ask?"

"I just wondered if you suspected who it was you fought the duel with, that is all."

"No; but you speak as if you know who he is."

"And so I do."

The man's bonds had been cut, by this time, and he was on his feet. Some clothing had been produced by one of the men who had an extra suit along, and Inglesby was donning it.

"You say you know who the young rebel is?"

"Yes."

"Well," impatiently, "who is he?"

"His name is Slater—Dick Slater!"

"What!" the captain cried. "You don't mean it?"

"Yes, I do."

"How do you know he is Dick Slater?"

"He told me so."

"He did?"

"Yes; and he told me to warn you to take your men and get away from this part of the country."

"He told you to tell me that?"

"Yes."

The captain laughed scornfully. "I wonder if he thinks he can scare me?"

"I don't know; he didn't act or talk like he was trying to frighten any one. He talked earnestly, just as if he meant it."

"Oh, he did?"

"Yes; and you will be willing to admit that he is a dangerous fellow. Your experience with him, and my experience has proven that."

"True; but what could he do to injure two hundred of the king's soldiers?"

"Didn't you see that crowd a while ago, captain?" in surprise. "Those were his 'Liberty Boys,' and they will make it lively for us if we don't look out, you may be sure of that."

The captain looked sober. "I judge that you are right, and those were the fellows known in the North as 'The Liberty Boys of '76'; but all the same they, only a hundred in number, cannot thrash two hundred of the king's soldiers."

"Perhaps not."

The captain frowned. "You seem doubtful," he said.

"Well, I have had some experience with Dick Slater, and we have all seen what the 'Liberty Boys' can do."

"They took us by surprise."

"True; and they may do so again."

"We'll be on the lookout for them."

"Well, we will need to be; that is my way of thinking."

"That is all right; I will break up this band of rebels, and kill or capture the whole gang!" declared the captain, somewhat boastfully.

"Take care that the 'Liberty Boys' don't serve you and your men that way, Captain Garver!" cried a voice, coming from no one knew where.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARCHING AGAINST THE ENEMY.

The men looked all around them and then at one another. They did not know what to make of the strange affair.

"That was the voice of Dick Slater," said the man who had been made a prisoner by the youth.

"He is somewhere around here!" cried the captain. "Let us look for the scoundrel! Scatter, men; and run him to earth!"

The sound of mocking laughter came to the ears of the redecoats and again they looked at one another doubtfully. They did not think there was much chance of running down a fellow who was so daring as this one seemed to be. They obeyed the captain's order, however, and, scattering, looked everywhere in the vicinity for the owner of the mysterious voice; but were unable to find him.

After ten minutes of this work they returned to where the captain was and reported that they had been unable to get sight of the owner of the voice.

The captain was very much disappointed, as he had hoped they would succeed in getting hold of the daring youth, and that would have been a triumph indeed.

"Oh, well, the affair has been deferred, that is all," said the officer; "we will get him sooner or later."

"It will be later—ha, ha, ha!" came a mocking voice, followed by mocking laughter. As before, it was impossible to locate the direction from which the voice came.

The men looked at one another in a startled manner, while a curse of rage and disgust escaped the captain's lips.

"A great fist you made of searching for that rebel!" he cried. "He has been right near at hand all the time!"

"Your men could not find me if they were to search a week, captain!" came back the voice. "You might as well give up that idea as well as that of trying to kill or capture the 'Liberty Boys.' If you remain in this vicinity and try to put your plan into operation it will go hard with you and your men."

"I'll risk it," cried the captain; "and I'll have you by the heels, too, in a very short time, you insolent young scoundrel!"

"Do you think so?"

"Yes. Scatter, men, and hunt for him!"

"Maybe he's up in a tree, captain," suggested one of the men.

"It is possible. Keep a sharp lookout up in the tree-tops, anyway."

The sound of mocking laughter came to the captain's ears, causing him to stamp his foot with rage and utter a curse. The men scattered and looked in every direction, keeping a sharp lookout up in the tops of the trees as well as all around them, but saw nothing of the daring "Liberty Boy." They returned to where the captain stood, after

fifteen minutes of this work, and reported their non-success.

He was angry and disgusted. "It is outrageous that a common rebel should be able to foil the soldiers of the king in this fashion!" he cried. "It is galling, to say the least."

"I think he is rather an uncommon rebel, captain," said the fellow who had been made a prisoner by Dick.

"Well, there is no doubt of that," was the reply; "but, all the same, it is galling to think that he is able to set us at defiance in this fashion."

"What will we do now, Captain Garver?" the soldier asked.

"Well, the thing to do is to try to find those 'Liberty Boys,' as they call themselves."

The captain then gave the order for the party to advance. He instructed the men to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy, and for an ambush, and they put in the rest of the afternoon tramping through the woods without finding any signs of the youths for whom they were searching. They had come to the edge of the swamp a dozen times, but had not happened to find the pathway leading over to the island, and so they had no suspicion that they were within a mile of the "Liberty Boys."

At last, tired out from their tramping, they paused and the captain gave orders for them to go into camp. It was almost sundown, and would be dark soon, and the men were only too glad of the chance to rest.

They went into camp, built fires to cook their suppers, and put out sentinels to prevent their being surprised. And while they were thus employed, where was Dick Slater?

It was indeed the voice of the daring youth that had been heard by the redcoats, and that had caused them so much worry, and work of searching for the owner. He had stopped behind a large tree not far from where the redcoat lay whom he had made a prisoner, and he had heard all that was said and had made the remarks which Captain Garver and the soldiers had heard. When they started out to search for him he had retired quickly, and being an expert woodsman was enabled to get out of their way without difficulty. And as soon as they gave up searching for him and went back to where the captain was, he followed them. This was done over again, as we have seen, and he succeeded in creating a feeling of half awe, half fear in the breasts of the majority of the redcoats, though the feeling which dominated Captain Garver was anger and disgust at his inability to catch the daring youth.

Dick had followed the redcoats, keeping at a safe distance during the rest of the afternoon, and when they went

into camp he hastened and made his way back to the island.

He was greeted with joyous exclamations by the "Liberty Boys," and by Daisy Samuels and her parents, and the Forrests.

"So you have got back at last, have you?" cried Bob. "Jove! I was on the point of starting in search of you!"

"We thought that perhaps the redcoats had gobbled you," said George Samuels.

"I knew they hadn't," said Daisy. "How could they, when I am his mascot?"

"That's right, Daisy!" said Dick, approvingly; "the redcoats could not catch me so long as you are acting as my mascot."

"What have you been doing, Dick?" asked Mark Morrison, another of the "Liberty Boys."

"I have been keeping watch on the redcoats."

"Why, haven't they gone?" asked Mr. Samuels, in astonishment.

"The main army has, but they left a party behind for the especial purpose of looking after us."

"So that is what they have done, eh?" remarked Bob.

"Yes."

"How many men did they leave, Dick?" from Sam Sanderson.

"Two hundred."

"Two hundred, eh?" remarked Bob. "Say, Dick, can't we get at them and make them wish they had not stayed behind?"

"That is what I want to do, Bob."

"Well, what is to hinder?"

"Nothing that I know of. That is what made me late getting back. I wished to learn where they intended going into camp."

"And you know where they are encamped?"

"Yes."

"Good! Then we can go for them red-hot, to-night!"

"Such is my intention."

"Good! That's the way to talk!" cried Bob, in delight.

"Won't it be dangerous for you to attack double your own number?" asked Mrs. Samuels, somewhat anxiously.

"No; for we shall take them by surprise, and that will more than equalize matters."

"Yes, that will make a difference."

"The biggest difference in the world," said Mark Morrison.

"How far are the redcoats from here?" asked Frank Forrest.

"About a mile and a half."

"Ah, that is handy to us."

"Yes; we can stay here till midnight and then set out and be ready to make the attack within the hour."

The "Liberty Boys" ate their suppers and then began looking to their weapons. There was likely to be lively work before morning, and they wished their tools to be in the best possible condition. By nine o'clock they had this work finished, and were ready for anything. Having nothing else to do they laughed and talked and told stories. They had no camp-fires, as they were afraid the light might be seen by some prowling redcoat scout, and they did not wish to be the ones to be surprised. It was their desire and intention to surprise the redcoats.

Although their parents went to bed at a reasonable hour, Daisy Samuels and Lucy and Jennie Forrest remained up to see the youths off. Daisy said they must not go until they had been wished good luck by their mascot, and the other two girls were eager to remain up and see the "Liberty Boys" start.

When they were ready at midnight, and just as they were about to start, Daisy took up her position in front of them and said: "Your mascot wishes you the best of luck in this expedition. Good-by, and may you all return in safety."

"Three subdued cheers for the mascot!" said Bob Estabrook. "I would have said 'roaring cheers,' but I'm afraid some redcoat might hear us. All together now: Hurrah for Daisy Samuels, the beautiful mascot, and the idol of the company!"

The cheers were given in a subdued tone, and then waving their hands to the girls, the youths marched away.

They were soon making their way in single file along the crooked pathway, and when they reached the mainland Dick took the lead and guided them in the direction of the point where the redcoats had gone into camp.

Twenty minutes later he gave the signal for the party to come to a stop, and the youths obeyed. Then Dick stole forward to reconnoitre. He wished to locate the sentinel, and if possible make a prisoner of him.

He crept forward, softly and finally succeeded in locating the sentinel. The fellow was standing, leaning against a tree, and the outlines of his form could barely be seen. It was a moonlight night, but the heavy foliage on the trees made it quite dark.

Dick crept forward, but in a semi-circle. He wished to approach the fellow from the rear. Dick was careful, but he accidentally stepped on a dry twig, which broke, giving out a snapping sound that was startling in the silence of the night.

It certainly must have startled the sentinel greatly, for he jerked up his musket and fired in the direction from which the sound had come without taking the trouble to challenge; and then he caught sight of the shadowy form of the youth and leaped forward intent on bayonetting the prowler.

Dick saw that there was no time for hesitation. The redcoats would be aroused, and up and on guard in a few moments, anyway, by the shot and drawing a pistol, he shot the sentinel dead. Then he called out:

"Forward, 'Liberty Boys'! Come, quick, and give it to them before they are fully awake!"

The "Liberty Boys" came rushing forward, and as soon as they reached Dick's side, he led them still further forward, to where they could get a fair chance at the redcoats, who were now on their feet and getting ready to make a fight.

"All ready!" cried Dick. "Take aim! Fire!"

A volley rang out.

CHAPTER IX.

STRIKING THE ENEMY A BLOW.

The volley did considerable execution. The "Liberty Boys," ever calm and cool, had taken good aim, and had dropped at least a score of the redcoats.

The British were thrown into confusion, but the voice of Captain Garver was heard, calling out to them to keep cool, and charge the "rebels."

"We outnumber them two to one!" the captain cried. "Charge them, I say! Charge!"

This had the effect of bringing the redcoats to their senses, and they leaped forward in obedience to their leader's command, and charged toward the point from which the volley had come.

"Now a volley from the pistols!" cried Dick. "Steady! Take aim. Fire!"

Crash, roar!

Again a volley rang out and this time about fifteen men went down. It did not have the effect of checking the advance of the redcoats, but it enraged them so that they fired a volley. As it happened the "Liberty Boys" were well sheltered behind trees, and although one or two were slightly wounded not one was killed.

A shrill whistle pierced the air. This was the signal for the youths to retreat. They hastened to obey, and in

retreating each youth went entirely on his own hook; no attempt being made to keep order. Dick had tested the matter thoroughly, many times in practice, and had learned that it was possible for his "Liberty Boys" to retreat, when in timber, almost without being in any danger whatever from shots from a pursuing enemy. The youths were all skilled woodsmen, and made this possible; where, in the case of soldiers who had not this skill and knowledge, many would fall through the unnecessary exposure of their persons in keeping in order and running blindly ahead.

The redcoats charged forward, but did not find the enemy, and were disappointed. They kept on going, however, urged thereto by the angry voice of Captain Garver, and raced through the timber a distance of a quarter of a mile, at least. Then, seeing nothing of the enemy, they halted and reluctantly returned to their encampment.

Captain Garver was almost wild with rage. Twenty-four of his men had been killed and fourteen more were wounded, and he was not at all sure that he had inflicted a bit of damage on the enemy. It was maddening, and he raved like a madman.

"We must run those scoundrels to earth!" he cried. "This thing has got to be stopped! They have done enough already and we must not permit them to do anything more. We will hunt them to their holes and kill them without compunction!"

He at once placed out two lines of pickets and then detailed four men to act as scouts. "Stay out till morning," he told the scouts; "find the hiding-place of the rebels, if possible, but if you do not succeed, return, and I will send out four more men in your places. We will never let up till we have located them and when once we have done that—good-by, 'Liberty Boys'!"

The four men who were to act as scouts set out. They were not very skilled in woodcraft, however, and although their commander was confident they would be able to find the "Liberty Boys," they themselves felt that the "Liberty Boys" were much more likely to find them; and in this they were right, for they had not gone a quarter of a mile from the encampment before they were being followed by a score of the youths.

Dick had foreseen what Captain Garver would do, and had made arrangements to capture the scouts. This was not a difficult thing to accomplish, and when the redcoats were far enough away from their encampment so that there would be no danger that they could give the alarm, Dick gave the order, and his youths rushed forward and seized the scouts.

The fellows were prisoners in a jiffy, and they were so

astonished they never uttered a yell. They realized that what they had feared might happen, really had happened, and had nothing to say.

"Well," said Dick, "what do you think about it? Do you think you will be able to locate the 'Liberty Boys' and return and give Captain Garver the information?"

"It doesn't look much like it," growled one, in reply.

"You are right; it doesn't. I should think that your commander would begin to see, after a while, that he cannot make a success of fighting against us."

"He is one of those stubborn fellows who are not willing to acknowledge themselves beaten," said one of the men. "He will keep after you till he gets the better of you, or you get the better of him."

"It will be the latter. Well, I am going to give him one more chance. I am going to send you fellows back to the encampment, and I want you to tell him that I said for him to leave this part of the country at once and for him to not burn another house. If he does, it will go hard with him."

"We'll tell him," one of the men said; and they drew breaths of relief to think that they were going to be allowed to return to their encampment in safety.

"Very good," said Dick; "set out at once and don't forget to tell Captain Garver what I have told you to tell him."

"All right; but—you haven't freed our arms yet."

The "Liberty Boys" had bound the arms of the four scouts with their own belts, after disarming them.

"We are not going to free your arms. Your legs are free and you can walk as well, almost, with your arms bound as with them free. You are now at liberty to go."

The men realized that it would do no good to protest, so they started without another word. To tell the truth they were glad to get away on any terms.

They had not much difficulty in finding their way back to the encampment, and only fell down once or twice on the way. As may well be supposed, however, their appearance at the encampment, with their arms bound, was the signal for great excitement among the redcoats.

A great crowd gathered around the four men and questions galore were fired at them.

"What is the matter?"

"Who did that?"

"How did it happen?"

"How came your arms to be tied?"

"What does it mean?"

Such were a few of the questions asked, and the four answered as best they could. Captain Garver had lain

down, but when word was taken to him that the four scouts he had sent out had returned, with their arms bound together behind their backs, he leaped up and rushed out at once, eager to know what it meant.

"What's this I hear?" he cried, breaking through the crowd surrounding the four men. "What's this I hear? The scouts back again and with their arms bound? What does it mean? Where are they? Let me see them!"

The men gave way before their commander, and in a few moments he stood before the four men. Their arms were still bound, the men having been so amazed and so eager to question that they had not thought to cut or unfasten the bonds, and the captain stared at the four in open-mouthed amazement.

"What in the fiend's name does this mean?" he finally bawled, amazement giving way to anger. "How come you here with your arms bound in this fashion?"

"It's easy enough to tell you that," replied one; "Dick Slater and the 'Liberty Boys' found us, instead of us finding them."

"What! You don't mean to say that those scoundrels did this?"

"That is just what I do mean to say. They did it; and Dick Slater sent us back in this fashion as a warning to you. He told us to tell you that it will be best for you to get out of this part of the country. Also he said that you must not burn any more houses, and that if you did so it would go hard with you."

"Ha! he said all that, did he?" cried the captain, in a rage.

"Yes."

"The impudent young scoundrel! Oh, but I shall have a big account to settle with him when the day of reckoning comes!"

"I tell you that is a dangerous gang to fool with!" one of the four said. "I don't believe that we shall be able to do anything with them."

"I'll show you! Just wait; we'll lay them by the heels yet!"

"Somebody free our arms," said one of the four; "this isn't a very pleasant fix to be in."

Several of the comrades of the four leaped forward, and the belts were unbuckled and the men's arms were freed. "There; that feels a bit better," said one in a tone of satisfaction.

The captain asked the four a number of questions, and they told everything just as it had occurred. "I tell you, captain, there isn't any use for us to try to play the spy on those fellows," said one; "they are adepts at that sort

of work and can keep track of us much easier than we can of them. I think we will be better off to get away from this part of the country just as this fellow advises us to do."

"Never!" declared the captain. "I am going to stay right here until I run them to earth!"

Meanwhile Dick Slater and the "Liberty Boys" were making their way back to the island. They reached the encampment on the island three-quarters of an hour later, and succeeded in getting into their quarters without rousing the members of the Samuels and Forrest families up.

Next morning when the folks learned of the victory the "Liberty Boys" had won over the British they were delighted.

"Didn't I tell you you would win?" cried Daisy, joyously. "Oh, I am a good mascot!"

"Indeed you are, Miss Daisy!" declared Dick. "You brought us the best of luck."

"I knew I would!"

The members of the company bowed low before Daisy and gave her three cheers, which pleased the girl greatly, and her eyes fairly shone with delight.

"What fun it is to be mascot for a company of young fellows like those!" she said to Lucy and Jennie, a little later.

"Of course it is," agreed Lucy; "and I think you are real mean for wanting all the fun to yourself, Daisy!"

"Oh, shut up, Lucy!" said Jennie; "Daisy was the mascot before we knew there were any such persons as the 'Liberty Boys' in this part of the country, and I don't think you have any right to say anything like that."

"You would like to be a mascot if you could, Jennie," retorted her sister. "You know you said so last night."

"Of course I should like it; but I am not going to make a fuss because some one else has got to be one, and I haven't."

Breakfast being over Dick told the youths to take things easy, while he went over to the mainland and scouted around and saw what the redcoats were doing.

"All right; but you want to be careful, Dick," said Bob; "if the redcoats should get hold of you now they would make short work of you, I am afraid."

"You are right; but I will see to it that they don't get hold of me."

Dick walked over to where Daisy sat and said: "Wish me good luck, little mascot. I am going on a scouting expedition."

"Very well; I do wish you good luck, with all my heart!" the girl replied, blushing before his look.

"Good! Now I will be lucky, I know, and shall not be afraid of getting captured by the redcoats."

Then he bowed to Daisy and the other two girls and walked away.

"Isn't he handsome!" exclaimed Lucy, who was impressionable.

"Yes, he is handsome," agreed Jennie. "Don't you think so, Daisy?"

"Yes, I do," was the low reply; and the girl looked studiously down at the ground; and did not meet the gaze of the other two. Was she afraid they might read something in her eyes? It looked a bit suspicious.

Meantime Dick was hastening along the path leading to the mainland, and when he was still a hundred yards from it he suddenly paused and gave utterance to a low exclamation.

"Jove! there is a redcoat!" he murmured.

CHAPTER X.

DICK AND THE JEALOUS YOUTH.

Dick had caught sight of a redcoat, who was at the point where the path entered the swamp. The fellow had evidently just discovered the path and was starting to follow it. Had he been looking in Dick's direction he would have seen the youth, but his eyes were on the ground at his feet and he did not know that any one was near.

Dick dropped to the ground and hid behind some bushes, and when the redcoat finally looked in that direction there was nothing to indicate the presence of any one.

The British soldier stole forward with cautious steps. He was undoubtedly a scout from the force under Captain Garver, and was likely pluming himself on having found a pathway leading into the swamp. Doubtless he already saw himself spying upon the patriots whom he suspected might be hidden in the swamp.

But he had some one to reckon with before doing this; that some one was Dick Slater, the most dangerous fellow in that part of the country and the probabilities were that the redcoat would not do any spying very soon.

On he came, slowly and cautiously. He finally reached the point where Dick lay concealed behind the bushes, and with consummate skill the youth moved slowly around behind the bushes, keeping them ever between himself and the redcoat, as the latter approached. Then when the soldier had passed and his back was toward Dick, the youth

leaped to his feet and dealt the fellow a blow on the head with the butt of a pistol, knocking him to the ground, insensible.

Dick glanced toward the mainland and saw that no other redcoat was in sight, and then he quickly fastened the insensible man's arms together behind his back with his belt, and, throwing the form over his shoulder, carried the fellow clear back to the encampment on the island.

To say that Dick's approach with the redcoat on his shoulder, created excitement, is putting it mildly. The "Liberty Boys" came running to meet Dick and promptly relieved him of his load, while they asked many questions regarding the affair.

"Where did you find him?"

"How did you manage to capture him?"

"What was he doing?"

"Were there any more?"

Dick answered the questions, and soon all knew the whole story. "He was evidently a spy," said Dick.

"There isn't any doubt regarding that," agreed Bob.

"Well, he won't do any more spy work right away!" from Mark Morrison.

"Didn't I tell you you would have good luck?" cried Daisy, with sparkling eyes.

"So you did, Daisy," replied Dick, with a smile.

"What will we do with this chap, Dick?" asked Bob.

"We will have to hold him a prisoner, Bob. I don't like to burden ourselves with prisoners, but it will be necessary to hold him, for he had discovered the path leading to the island, and if he were to be allowed to go back he could lead the enemy to this spot."

"That's right; well, we'll see to it that he doesn't get away from here."

"Good!" and then after a little further conversation Dick again took his departure.

"I will have to be careful, I judge," he said to himself; "the redcoats have scouts out and I am likely to run across one at any moment."

He approached the mainland very cautiously, for he did not know but there might be some of the redcoats hidden near, and he did not wish to be captured.

He did not see any signs of the enemy, however, and succeeded in reaching the mainland in safety. Then he set out and made his way through the timber, keeping the sharpest kind of a lookout in all directions. He spent two or three hours at this and got sight of several redcoat spies and scouts, but managed to keep from being seen by them. He discovered that the main body was in camp at the same spot where it had been when the "Liberty Boys" made

the attack the night before, and he judged that the redcoats intended to remain there for a while.

Finally feeling that he had accomplished all that he could, Dick started on his return to the encampment on the island. He had almost reached the point where the path entered the swamp when he heard a shrill scream in the voice of a girl, and he rushed forward to see what was taking place.

To his surprise and alarm he saw Daisy Samuels struggling in the grasp of three redcoats.

"Great guns, what does that mean?" he exclaimed to himself. "How came Daisy to be over here on the mainland?"

While asking himself these questions Dick was dashing forward. One of the redcoats saw him coming, and letting go of the girl, drew a pistol.

He did not discharge it, however. Dick was too quick for him, and fired first, the bullet striking the redcoat fair between the eyes and killing him instantly.

The other two, startled by this occurrence, let go of the girl and drew their pistols. Dick had a pistol in his left hand and fired, severely wounding one of the two. The other fired, but he was excited and missed by two inches. Before he could draw another pistol Dick was upon him, and, seizing him by the throat, dealt him a terrible blow over the head, felling him to the ground.

The battle was over and Dick was victorious. He had overcome the odds of three to one.

"What was the trouble, Daisy?" asked Dick. "How did it happen? How came you to be over here on the mainland?"

The girl was still pale, but had recovered her self-possession sufficiently to enable her to answer. "I—I—came over to—to—see if I—if I could find Frank," she replied.

"Came over to see if you could find Frank?"

"Y-yes."

"You mean Frank Forrest, of course?"

"Y-yes."

"Did he come over onto the mainland?"

The girl nodded.

"Why did he do so?"

"The girl blushed and looked confused. "I—he—got angry at me on account of—on account of my refusing to—to let him tell me he li-liked me," she stammered; "and then he said he was going to go over and fight the redcoats single-handed and alone, the same as Dick Slater did, and then I would like him."

A light broke in upon Dick's understanding. It was a love affair. Frank Forrest had tried to get Daisy to let

him tell her how much he loved her, with the intention, undoubtedly, of asking her to be his wife, and when she had refused to let him do so, he had rushed away in a fit of jealous anger and had probably gotten himself into trouble as a result. Daisy, fearing for his safety, had followed, and Dick argued from this that she thought a good deal of the handsome young fellow; and he was glad of it, for he had feared that Daisy was taking a liking to him.

"So he came over here to the mainland, did he?" remarked the youth.

"Y-yes; and I—I'm afraid that—that he may get killed."

Dick nodded. "There is danger that he may at least fall into the hands of the redcoats. I hope, however, that such may not be his fate."

"And I'm to blame!" the girl exclaimed, clasping her hands and looking very much distressed indeed.

"Only partly to blame, Miss Daisy."

"Oh, I'm to blame; yes, I'm altogether to blame!"

Dick wondered if he couldn't make a match of it for Frank, and he decided to try, at any rate. "See here, Daisy," he said, "if I will find Frank and bring him back to you, safe and well, will you let him tell you what he wished to when you refused and he went away?"

The girl hesitated and looked at Dick for almost a minute before replying. Then she said: "What would you advise me to do, Dick—Mr. Slater?"

The voice trembled slightly, and there was almost a beseeching look in the girl's eyes as she asked the question. Dick did not hesitate to answer, however. He felt that here was his chance to do the right thing, and perhaps save the girl a great deal of suffering in the future, even though it might not leave her at the present time, and so he said: "I would advise you to let Frank tell you what he wished to, Daisy."

"And—and—what would you advise me to say to him in—in answer?"

The girl had grown pale again and Dick felt sorry for her, but he felt sure that she liked Frank very much indeed, and would soon learn to love him, and so he said: "That is asking a bit too much of me, don't you think, Daisy? However, since you have asked me I will say that I don't think you will ever find a finer fellow than Frank. He is brave, good-hearted and handsome, and would make you a splendid husband."

The girl looked at Dick for a few moments as if pondering, and said, quietly: "Thank you Dick—Mr. Slater. I—I will—will think of what—of what you—have said."

It was evident that she had thought of it already, but he brightened up very quickly. She was a brave girl, and then, too, the probabilities are that she thought more of Frank Forrest than she had thought was the case, and not quite so much of Dick as she had fancied.

"Now, Daisy, you hurry back to the encampment," said Dick; "I will go at once and search for Frank. I won't come back till I have found him."

Daisy stood still and looked at Dick for a few moments, and then she suddenly leaped forward and throwing her arms about his neck gave him a kiss. "There, Dick, my brother! That is for saving me from those redcoats," she said; "and now if you will find Frank and bring him safely back to me I will give you another."

"All right, little mascot; I'll find him and bring him back," said Dick, confidently; "now you run along home."

The girl hastened away, pausing at the entrance of the path into the swamp to wave her hand to Dick, who waved in return.

"A good, beautiful, noble-hearted girl!" murmured Dick. "I hope that she and Frank will be married and live a long and happy life."

He turned and started through the timber, intent on finding Frank Forrest, and had not gone a hundred feet before the very youth he was in search of stepped out from behind a tree and covered Dick with a pistol. There was a desperate look in the young man's eyes, and the young "Liberty Boy" realized that he was facing a man who was mad with jealousy.

"I saw it all," said Frank, in a low, fierce tone; "I saw you kiss her, and I am going to kill you! What right have you Northern fellows to come down here and win our sweethearts away from us? Daisy liked me a great deal before you came, and I am sure she would have married me; but now—now—she doesn't care for me—and it is all on your account! I am going to kill you!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE "LIBERTY BOYS" STRIKE AGAIN.

Dick did not show any sign of fear. Instead he smiled and lifted his hand in a restraining gesture. "You are laboring under a false impression, Frank," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, just what I say. I am not Daisy's lover."

Frank looked skeptical. "You are not?" he remarked, in a tone that implied doubt.

"I am not."

"But I saw you kiss her. And if you were not her lover, why would you do that?"

"She kissed me, Frank," he said; "I didn't kiss her."

"It's all the same—and I don't believe that you didn't kiss her, anyway. How could you help it, with as pretty and sweet a girl as Daisy?"

This was something of a stumper, but Dick was equal to the emergency. "I will tell you why Daisy kissed me, Frank," he said quietly, "and then if you want to shoot me, do so. I shall not lift a hand to prevent you."

"All right; tell me, then."

Dick made up his mind to tell Frank a little, white lie. He believed it would be justifiable under the circumstances. So he said: "Daisy kissed me because I promised to find you and bring you safely back to the encampment."

Frank started, and a joyous light shone in his eyes. "Do you really mean that, Dick?" he asked, his voice trembling. "Is that the truth, sure enough?"

"It is the truth, Frank. She loves you, and you only. The kiss she gave me was only a brotherly one—and, by the way, she promised me another if I brought you safely back, so come along. I'm going to claim it, too, old fellow, so you must bottle up that jealousy of yours, and give me a chance to collect my earnings."

Frank stared at Dick in silence. It was evident that he was a bit mixed, even yet. "How do I know that what you say is true?" he asked, presently.

"Why, isn't the fact that Daisy had come over here onto the mainland, at the risk of capture by the redcoats, in search of you, proof enough that she loves you, Frank?" replied Dick.

"Did she do that?" eagerly.

"Most assuredly. You saw her over here yourself; and she told me that was why she came."

"Glory, Dick!" cried Frank. "I am going to believe what you say, and I'm going to put the matter to the test just as soon as I can, after we get back to the island, and if it doesn't turn out as you have said it will, then—look out!"

Dick smiled and did not look at all alarmed. "It will turn out as I have said, Frank," he said, positively.

Frank returned the pistol to his belt and the two set out for the encampment. When they reached it they found that Daisy was there and Frank Forrest watched his opportunity and got the girl to go for a walk with him. When they returned, half an hour later, Frank's face was the pic-

ture of happiness, and there was a look of contentment on Daisy's face. Dick saw and understood and was glad.

"It is all right," he said to himself; "Frank has asked her to be his wife, and she has consented. I am glad, and they will be happy together."

That afternoon Frank got the opportunity to speak privately to Dick, and told him that Daisy had promised to be his wife. "I am sorry I treated you the way I did this morning, Dick," he said; "I beg your pardon. My excuse is that I was mad with pain and jealousy."

"That is all right, Frank," smiled Dick; "you will be happy, I know, and I congratulate you. One thing: Don't get your pistol out when I go to claim the kiss Daisy owes me for finding and bringing you safely back to her!"

"I won't," with a laugh. "I'm so happy that I don't believe I should begrudge you a dozen."

"I'll claim only the one that is due me, Frank," with a laugh.

About midnight that night the "Liberty Boys" stole away from the island, and made their way to the mainland. As on the night before they made their way in the direction of the encampment of the British, for it was Dick's intention to strike Captain Garver's force a hard blow.

The "Liberty Boys" made a wide circuit this time, however, and approached the British encampment from the opposite direction from the way they had approached the night before. Dick believed that by so doing he would be enabled to take the enemy by surprise. They had failed to do this the night before, but he did not wish to fail a second time.

When they were on the opposite side of the encampment, Dick gave the order for the "Liberty Boys" to approach as cautiously as possible. They obeyed and crept forward till they were within one hundred yards of the British encampment. Then, as in the former instance, Dick crept forward to locate the sentinels and if possible silence one or more of them.

This time he was more successful and succeeded in finding two sentinels, and knocked them senseless with the butt of his pistol. Then he crept back and gave the order to advance. The youths obeyed the order, and when they were at the edge of the encampment they, at a signal from their young leader, gave utterance to their thrilling war-cry: "Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

Of course the redcoats were aroused from their sleep and leaped to their feet and groped blindly about for their muskets. This was just what the youths had expected they would do, and what they desired they should do, as when

in an upright position they presented a much better mark than when lying at full length on the ground—and it did not partake of the nature of assassination either.

Instantly Dick gave the signal and a volley was fired. At such close range terrible execution was done, and thirty at least of the redcoats fell to the ground, dead or wounded.

"Quick! a volley from the pistols now, boys!" cried Dick, and another deadly volley was poured into the mass of dazed redcoats.

"Give them still another!" cried Dick.

Crash, roar! Again a volley rang out, and almost as much damage resulted as had been the case at each of the others. It was terrible, but now the redcoats had secured their muskets and whirled to fire upon the enemy.

As they whirled, a shrill whistle was heard and the "Liberty Boys" dissolved as if by magic, each fellow leaping behind a tree with the quickness of thought.

Crash, roar! The redcoats fired, but the bullets did not damage the enemy a particle. Not a "Liberty Boy" was hit.

"Quick! Another volley!" cried Dick.

The youths fired and did considerable damage, after which there came a peculiar, quavering whistle, and they retreated, this being the signal for retreat. They were careful to keep the trees between themselves and the redcoats, and another volley, which was fired by the latter, did no damage to speak of, two of the youths receiving slight flesh wounds.

The redcoats were wildly excited and terribly angry, but they were smart enough to know that they could do nothing, so they did not pursue the enemy.

Captain Garver, who had been slightly wounded, ordered the men to attend to the wounded and bury the dead, and they went to work to do this. When they had finished and quiet again reigned in the camp the captain called a council of the three under-officers who were, with him, in command, and they talked over the recent affair and tried to make up their minds what they should do.

"Shall we stay here and try to get back at this dare-devil of a Dick Slater and his 'Liberty Boys,' or shall we give up and get away from here?" asked Captain Garver, looking anxiously at his fellow officers.

"Well, I'll tell you what I think about it," one replied. "In my opinion we are not a match for those 'Liberty Boys.' They are regular fiends to fight."

"Yes," from another; "and they are born woodsmen, and can get around through the timber as slyly as the red Indians. We will all lose our lives if we remain here; that is my opinion, at least."

"And mine," from the third officer; "we have already lost almost half our force, in either killed or wounded, and the rest will go the same way about to-morrow night if we remain here."

"But we would sooner or later be able to find the hiding place of the rebels, and then we could give them a dose of their own kind of medicine," said Captain Garver.

"There wouldn't be enough of us left to administer the medicine, I fear," said one.

"That's what I think," from another.

The third said the same, and the captain finally made up his mind that they were right. "We will keep a sharp lookout for the rest of the night," he said, "and the first thing in the morning we will break camp and go over onto the main road and be ready to join the main army when it comes back this way after capturing Charleston."

This plan was carried out. The redcoats broke camp next morning immediately after breakfast, and made their way over to the main road and went into camp near where the Samuels house had stood. It was the intention of Captain Garver to await the return of the main army—and he did this, but his force was attacked again at night, before this happened, and half the remaining number of men were killed and wounded.

When the main army came along a day or so later the captain learned that its mission had been a failure. It had failed to capture Charleston; he had failed to strike the "Liberty Boys" a blow, and it had been bad for the redcoats all around. The entire army marched back to Savannah.

Next day the "Liberty Boys" and the Samuelses and Forrests came forth from the swamp and went to work to rebuild the houses that had been destroyed by the redcoats.

Many hands makes light labor, and it did not take long to build two good-sized, roomy houses. Then the furniture belonging to the Samuelses was carried back by the "Liberty Boys" and placed in the new house amid great rejoicing.

Dick had secured information which made him confident it would be safe for the patriots to return to their homes, as the redcoats would have all they could do to take care of themselves and hold Savannah.

The "Liberty Boys" remained in the neighborhood a week longer and then Dick said they must be going, as there was work to do elsewhere. The Samuels folks and the Forrests and other patriot families hated to have the youths go as they were splendid protection from the redcoats, and they gathered at the Samuels home to see the youths off the day they were to go.

At last they were ready to start, and then Dick took hold of Daisy Samuels' hand and conducted her to a platform that stood near the front gate. It had been built to enable ladies to mount horses easily.

Dick Slater led the blushing girl to the edge of the platform, and, hat in hand, said: "Three cheers for our beautiful mascot, the idol of the company!"

The cheers were given with a will and Daisy was greatly pleased, her face flushing with pleasure and her eyes shining. Near at hand stood Frank Forrest, a happy look on his face. He felt sure of Daisy now, and was willing that she should be admired and honored by these noble-hearted "Liberty Boys."

"I believe you owe me a kiss, Daisy!" said Dick, smilingly.

"For what, Dick—Mr. Slater?" asked the girl, with a quick glance at Frank Forrest.

"You know—for bringing Frank back that time. Am I to have the kiss?"

The girl hesitated. "If Frank doesn't care," she said.

"He doesn't care, Daisy. He said I should have a dozen if I wished them, but I shall be satisfied with the one."

"I'll take the other eleven, Dick!" cried the irrepressible Bob Estabrook, but he didn't get them.

Dick kissed Daisy, leaped into the saddle, and then, with a wave of the hand and a cheer, the "Liberty Boys" rode away at a gallop—and that was the last time the patriot families of that region ever saw them.

THE END.

The next number (66) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' WRATH; OR, GOING FOR THE REDCOATS ROUGH-SHOD," by Harry Moore.

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